FEBRUARY 1966

Commentary

VOLUME FORTY-ONE, NUMBER TWO

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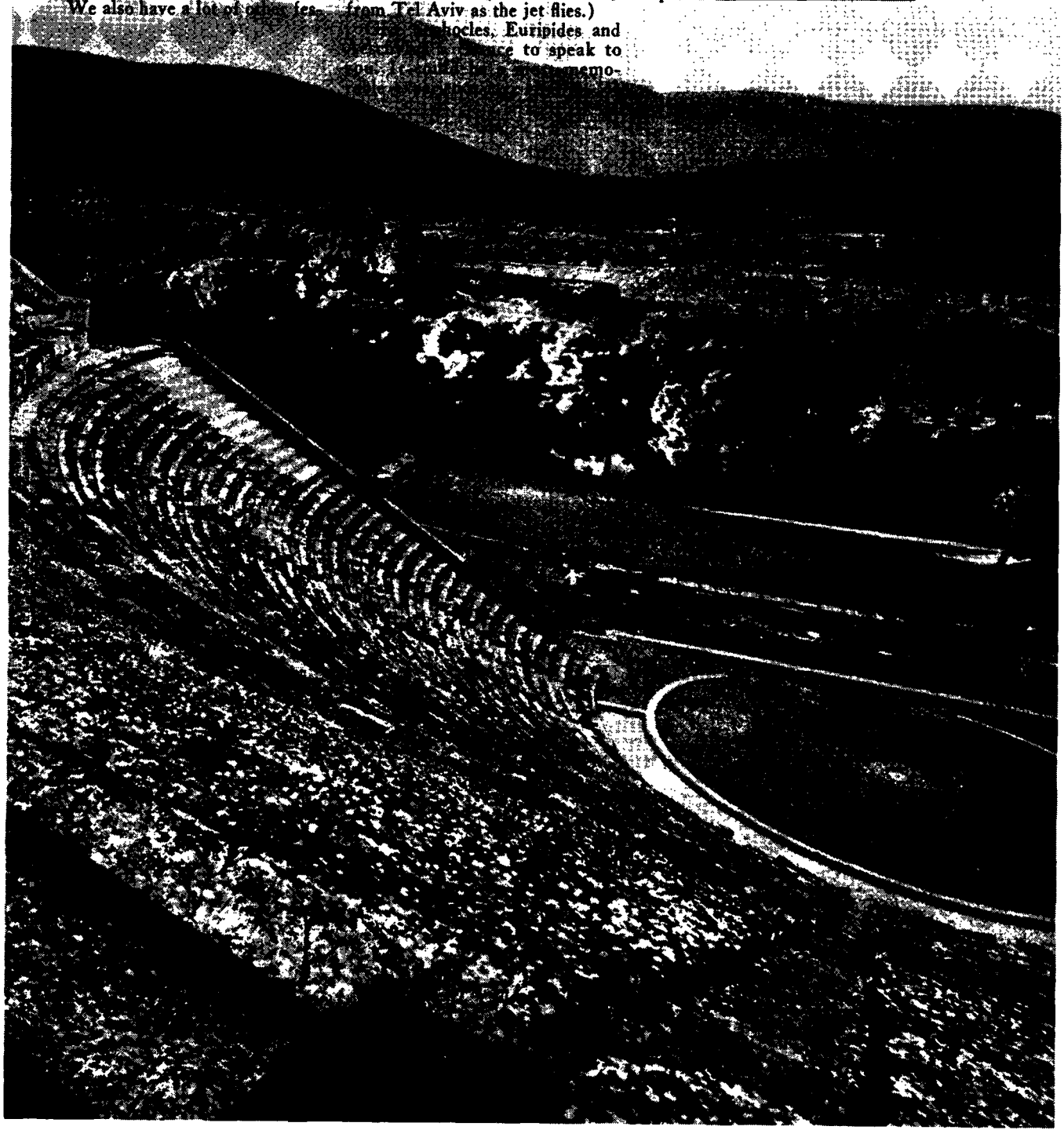

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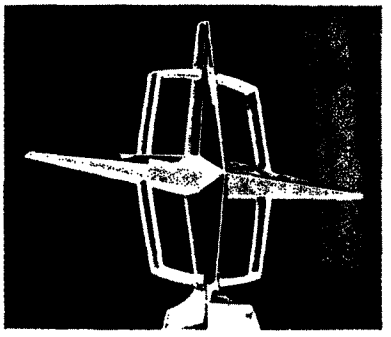

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Thought & Action (cont'd.)

To the Editor of Commentary:

What I disliked most about Henry Fairlie's article ["Johnson & the Intellectuals," Oct. '65] was its hypocrisy. After several pages of gratuitous advice to intellectuals to stay out of liberal and radical politics, he concludes by saying that the intellectual "should be using his mind now to inquire . . . into the survival of powerful and independent blocs in a country which is geared more and more to federal activity. . . ."

In other words, the intellectual *should* get into politics—on Mr. Fairlie's side. This, as far as I can figure out, means restoring the Republican party, obstructing Mr. Johnson's domestic program, and developing a new conservative congressional coalition to undo the damage done by "the collapse of the Southern bloc."

Whatever the validity of Mr. Fairlie's position, I resent his attempt to pass it off as non-political.

Herbert J. Gans
Center for Urban Education
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

Mr. Fairlie not only contends that there is a realm reserved for the intellectual which is different from that reserved for the politician, but also that the value of these two realms can be maintained only if they remain absolutely separate and absolutely distinct. Ultimately, his views must be judged on their own merits . . . but I think it useful to point out that they are the outgrowth of a long intellectual tradition. In the long run . . . his essay tells us more about the effect of British intellectual history upon present ideas, than it does about the proper relationship between power and intellect. . . .

. . . Much of British philosophy has been built upon what it has thought to be the necessity and therefore the value of separations. Hobbes's notion of the separation of man from man has seen its day in the economics of Adam Smith and the politics of John Stuart Mill. Although the concept of separation has drastically changed, I believe that it can still be found in the philosophy of A. J. Ayer . . . as well as in Mr. Fairlie's political views. (The value of this tradition is, at present, incidental to the fact that its ideas have been adopted uncritically by Mr. Fairlie.)

Quoting one of Britain's "greatest Prime Ministers," Mr. Fairlie tells how political decisions are made (or not made):

> There is just a build up of big and small events, of big and small factors, and they may not be brought to your notice until the issue has already been decided; and when you eventually have to decide, it may be in response to the smallest of them all. That is not "power" or "decision"; you are too much in the hands of events.

If we are to take this as a statement of fact . . . I am afraid that even Mr. Fairlie would shy away from its inevitable conclusion. For if the Prime Minister were just the creature of events, we would have no basis by which to evaluate either him or his decisions. We could attribute neither greatness nor mediocrity to him—we could only undertake to analyze the direction taken and the events determining it.

Yet, I believe there is some truth to the Prime Minister's statement. . . . It is probably true that at the moment of any crisis, the alternatives available have been extremely limited if not destroyed. . . . Certainly it is true that small events determine larger ones, just as it is also true that a statesman cannot keep an eye on all these events; it is even likely that a statesman might not become aware of all these events until they culminate in one grand event. However, all this means is that a statesman must be judged partially in terms of the men he has chosen to consider these events and to predict their future course. I would think that if the men on top of the power scale are too busy to make long-range predictions, their advisers are perhaps less so. Yet the intellectual, the man whose job Fairlie believes is to make long-range predictions and to inquire into the meaning of events, is removed by him from any direct influence in the decision-making process. He suggests that the intellectual should be comforted by the knowledge that "any truth which he may happen to discover will, in time, and not necessarily a long time at that, filter down into the bloodstream of the country." I re-

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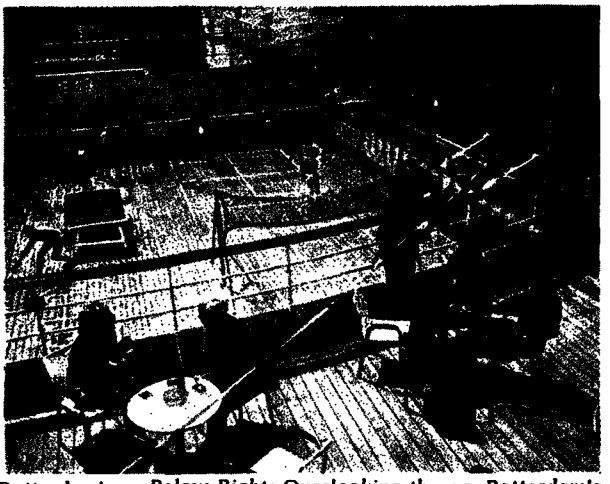

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member that somewhere John Stuart Mill expressed a similar hope, and we must remember that it is only a hope. . . .

WALTER FEINBERG
Oakland University
Rochester, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Henry Fairlie berates the intellectuals for being drawn to politics by the late President Kennedy. No doubt, many intellectuals were then induced (Fairlie would say "seduced") to take a more active part in politics at various levels than they had done since Adlai Stevenson's campaign of 1952. But this is to be commended, not disdained. If the intellectuals are repelled by politics, then decision-making from the White House down to the precincts will be left solely to hacks (like myself).

JORDAN ROSSEN
Detroit, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I expect that the idea of "social responsibility" will be offered to oppose Mr. Fairlie's views on the lack of "fitness" in the intellectual's attempts to engage in politics as an intellectual.

In a society at least nominally democratic, it is fitting for any and for all citizens to participate on any and on all sides of every political struggle. Each person who does so, does so as a citizen and some do so professionally, as politicians. . . . We must acknowledge with respect —sometimes with admiration—the call of social conscience, the awakening of political self-interest, the acceptance of his "true" vocation in any man. . . .

Nonetheless, it was an unusual pleasure to read Mr. Fairlie's article.

PAUL CORNYETZ
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Mr. Fairlie's article is full of glaring inconsistencies. For example, he confuses at several points the political practitioner (an elected official) with the political theoretician or policy-maker. By the same token, his statement that "the intellectual is seldom able to understand the nature of a political decision" offers a shocking example of linguistic opacity. If by "understand," he means "to condone on rational grounds," then, of course, he may have a point—however, it seems far more likely that "understand," in Mr. Fairlie's lexicon, also equals "participate in or act out"; therefore any action which may be inimical to one's habit or training . . . eludes one's power of reasoning and comprehension. . . .

Again, his statement that "temperamentally, the intellectual cannot bear a problem that is incapable of solution" smacks . . . of that phony authoritarianism which is far more consonant with the illusory world . . . of the politician out for votes than with the skeptical frame of reference usually associated with the intellectual. . . .

But the most serious contradiction in Mr. Fairlie's article is his assumption that political decision-making is wholly capricious and irrational (*vide* Attlee and the Turks), its success dependent less upon the nature of the initial decision than upon the workings of historical determinism or sheer luck, . . . its vision limited to the exigencies of the present moment. Yet he goes on to concede in the nicely wrapped consolation prize of his last paragraph that the intellectuals' play with political ideas . . . can "in time . . . filter down into the bloodstream of the country." But if politics is *a priori* irrational and dependent upon accident and/or whim, then how in the world can any of the intellectuals' "inquiries" make any difference? . . .

(Mrs.) BARBARA LEFCOWITZ
Chevy Chase, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Henry Fairlie's article represents —in a rather urbane voice, to be sure—the glorification of ignorance in dealing with politics: . . . He contents himself with ridiculing, rather than examining, the argument that political power can be wielded for desirable ends.

To leap, as he does, from the recognition that politicians usually operate from day to day, to the judgment that they ought to scorn longer perspectives, is ingenuous. It is harder, braver, more political . . . for us to stick it out in Vietnam, ignoring the costs to ourselves and to the Vietnamese people. The French fought for eight years before the future became the present for them. No point in *our* trying to figure out what's going to happen there in the long run or, indeed, even what our interest there is. . . .

And Mr. Fairlie argues that it is the intellectuals who are being ideological! His worship of *Realpolitik* is an echo from 32 years ago.

MITCHELL ZIMMERMAN
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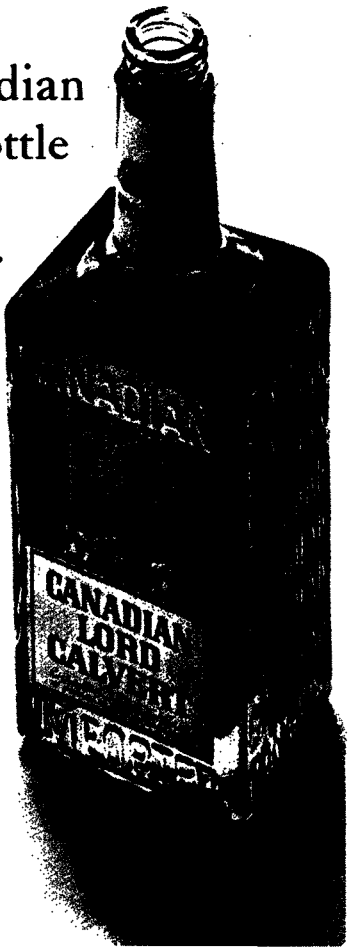

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TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

One can agree that Lyndon B. Johnson has frequently been accorded unjust treatment at the hands of intellectuals and still find much of Henry Fairlie's argument absurd. The obvious differences between the talents of politicians and those of intellectuals hardly justify the conclusion that intellectuals can play no productive role in public service. Can "high" politics consist merely of tactical skill, log-rolling, and short-range practicality? Are these the sole requisites of progressive government? I think not, and so apparently does Lyndon Johnson. Though his relationship with the intellectual community lacks the romance of the Kennedy years, he nonetheless continues to draw upon that community for ideas and idealism. . . .

Whatever frustrations political involvement inflicts upon the scholar, he is surely not to be condemned for seeking to infuse ideas and ideals into politics. Does Mr. Fairlie really believe that the greatest political service intellectuals could have rendered in the recent past was to support Goldwater Republicanism against the Democratic "Colossus"?

THOMAS N. GUINSBURG
Department of History
Hunter College
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Henry Fairlie's article was a journalistic high point. . . . Few things I've read have ordered and expressed so artfully my intuitions and impressions of a current phenomenon in American politics.

JOHN J. MCCARTNEY, JR.
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . The participation of intellectuals in political life is a long-standing tradition in this country which goes back to Thomas Jefferson. Yet before the Kennedy era, politics here was so base (perhaps unlike Mr. Fairlie's native England) that most intelligent Americans at once laughed at it and were ashamed of it. When some of our nation's finest minds finally entered politics, their very presence brightened America's political image throughout the world. Since 1963, that image has begun to fade.

Mr. Fairlie demands that intellectuals stay out of politics because they do not understand its intricacies, especially the complex process of political decision. He therefore chides Hans Morgenthau for taking a stand on Vietnam. Would he also rebuke the ministers who leave their pulpits . . . to enter politics by marching in Selma or by protesting U.S. bombings of civilians in Vietnam? Should only politicians —but never professors of political science—take a public stand on moral issues? . . .

(Mrs.) MARGARET J. MEYER
Los Angeles, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Is variety so important to COMMENTARY as to necessitate this kind of nihilistic dribble?

CHARLES SINGER
Bronx, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Henry Fairlie's article has the unmistakable stench of what public relations men call "the plant." If it wasn't, in fact, written by the C.I.A., the Pentagon, or the State Department, they certainly cast a long shadow over the author's typewriter.

There is little need for me to blast away at the article's specious thesis. Those among your readership who have been more directly attacked will surely do a good job of exposing the article's flimsy pretense. But I did want to express my personal disgust and disappointment that a magazine I have read all my adult life—and considered one of the nation's premier journals—allowed itself such a lapse of editorial taste. . . .

STEPHEN WERTHEIMER
Maplewood, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Mr. Fairlie's recommendation of a separation between the intellectual and political spheres can only further the disillusionment which most intellectuals harbor about politics. . . . Is it too naïve to believe that politicians and intellectuals can work together? . . .

The late President Kennedy was not, to my mind, an "intellectual" either (whatever the term means), yet intellectuals flocked to him. Why? No doubt it did have something to do with his youth, his verve, his "style"—yet I don't think the intellectuals were duped into thinking he was less of a wheeler-dealer than Johnson. . . . The difference between the Kennedy and Johnson administrations is perhaps best expressed by the difference between the terms "New Frontier" and "Great Society." Johnson wants the intellectuals behind him as

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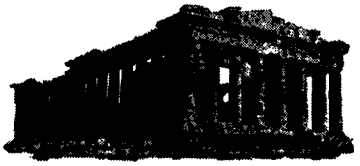

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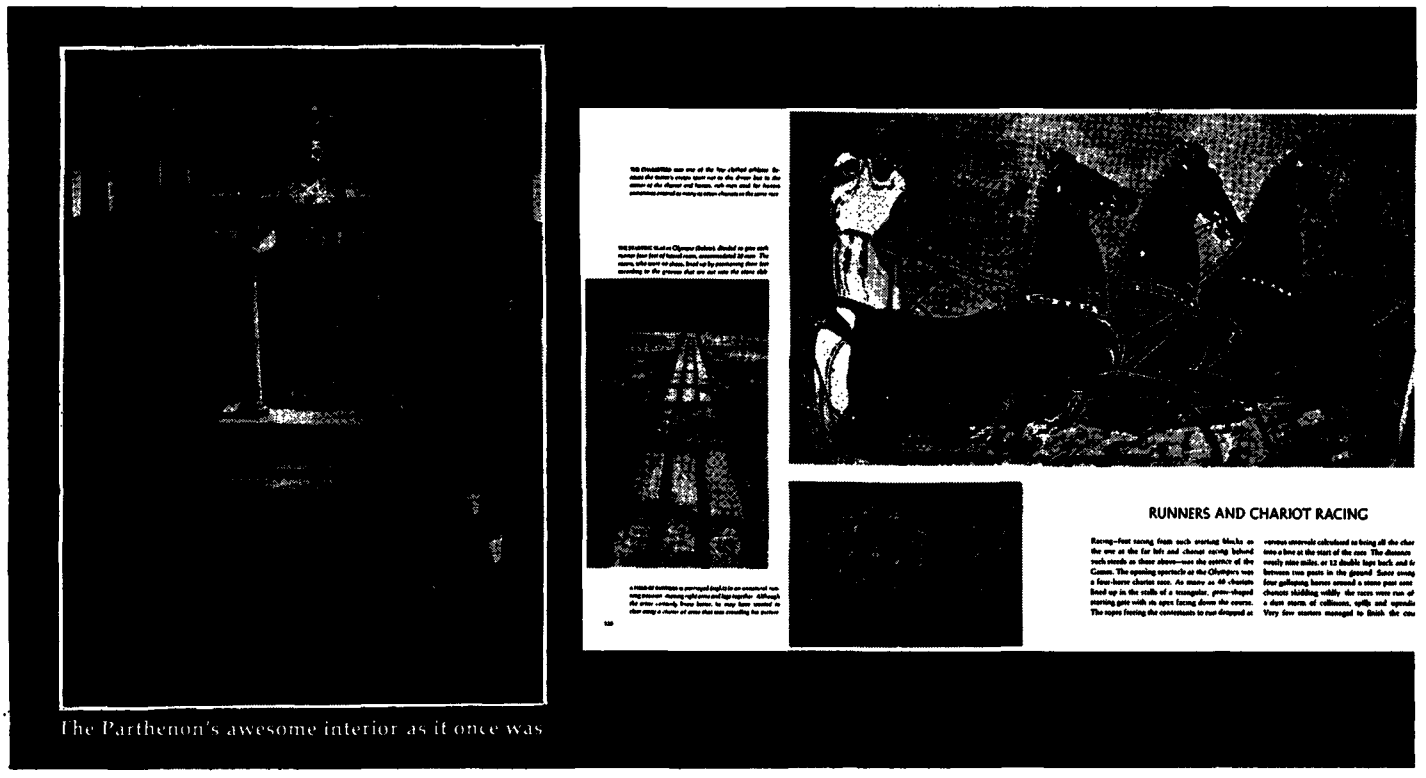

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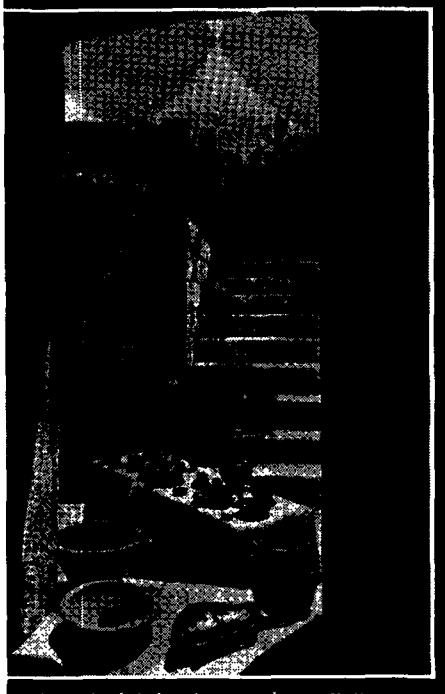
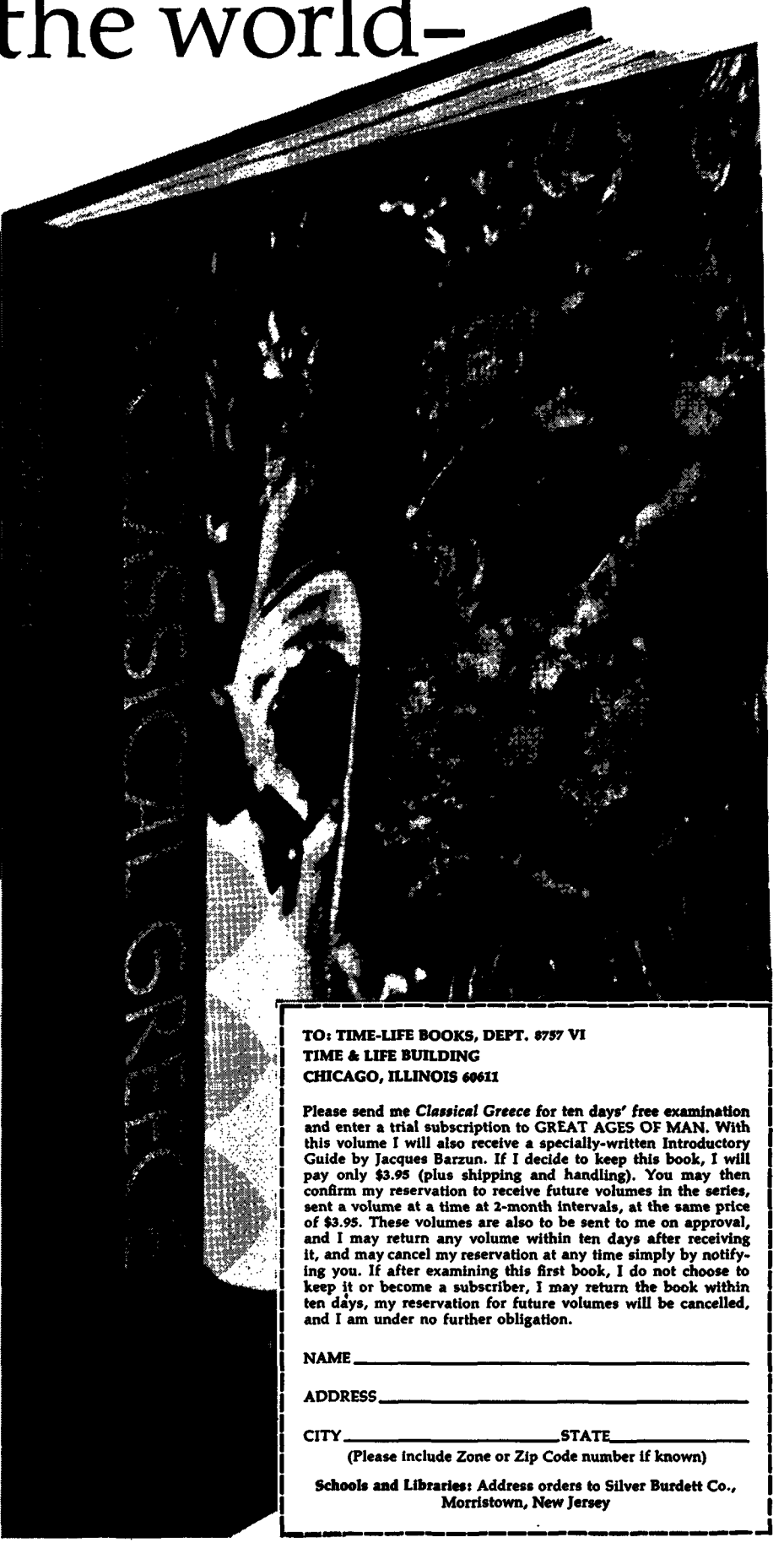


A typical Athenian meal, 500 B.C.



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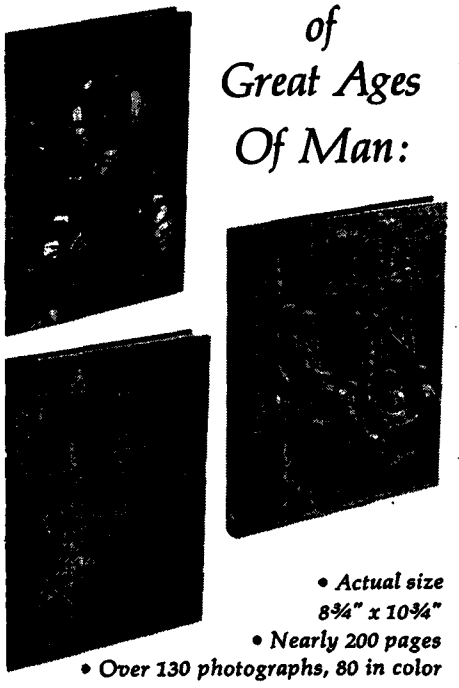

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merely another expression of support, another glorious accomplishment. . . . But the "New Frontier," I think, did really signify to intellectuals the possibility of a reconciliation between the intellectual and the political spheres. . . .

B. DEBORAH BETRON
Cornell University
Ithaca, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Henry Fairlie's analysis seems to me inadequate as a realistic appraisal. . . . He asserts, for example, that the politician cannot be concerned with "real" national interests, because this is a grand concept which is impractical in everyday politics. He then supports this thesis with the erroneous assumption that had Churchill been guided by the national interest in 1940, Britain would have immediately sued for peace with Germany. In fact, however, Churchill's decision to continue the war against Germany did reflect Britain's national interest. . . .

EDWIN K. WINER
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . For all that he may be a "fish out of water," the contributions of the intellectual to American public life, in positions below the level of the Presidency, have been not inconsiderable. One thinks of James Forrestal, . . . Adlai Stevenson, Henry L. Stimson. . . .

Surely it does not require a Pentagon major general to assess the choices inherent in our policy in the event of a Chinese or North Vietnamese invasion of South Vietnam; it does not require a saint to recognize the brutalities inherent in the methodical bombing and murder of "innocent" and poor Vietnamese; and it does not necessarily require a Secretary of State to visualize the deleterious effects overseas of an American policy which others may consider to be radical and/or extreme. . . .

JACK L. BAUMGRAS
Atlanta, Georgia

Science-Fiction Films

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Susan Sontag deserves a large *shazam* medal . . . for sitting through so many extra-terrestrial potboilers, but my impression of science-fiction and monster pictures differs somewhat from hers ["The Imagination of Disaster," October 1965].

They are made primarily for a youthful audience, as is shown by their total lack of sophistication, the irrelevance in them of emotional relationships, the fact that older characters are generally portrayed as evil or misguided. The youthful hero is usually involved in a conflict with an older person and almost always wins out. . . . In the straight monster pictures, the same young hero, possessing good old horse sense (sometimes reinforced with nuclear weaponry) defeats the supposedly omnipotent, indestructible monster—who appears to be a father-symbol. . . .

Another salient feature of these films is their xenophobia—though to protect foreign film revenues and relations with the Iron Curtain countries, the foreigners are not earthly ones, but outer-spacers . . . whom we can all hate freely on sight. . . .

But the oddest thing about these films is the absence for the most part of religion—no Earth God is called upon to intervene and destroy the alien monsters. . . . This is rather unusual for an industry most of whose products tell us constantly that faith can make the blind see, the lame walk, the drunk sober. . . . In the earliest horror films, after all, we learned that a crucifix was handy for stopping vampires. Why doesn't the same thing work on . . . the Thing, the Mysterians, Rodan, etc.? . . .

The final ineluctable moral of these films is that Man (or Boy) will prevail against . . . whatever it is that comes from wherever it comes to destroy us. True, we lose an awful lot. Our cities are razed and millions of people are killed. . . . But at the end somehow man is still there, building a new and bright . . . world. Miss Sontag is correct in bringing up the "Unthinkable." Herman Kahn's thesis finds its roots in these apocalyptic popcorn sellers. . . .

JONAS AARONS
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . May I say that the examples Susan Sontag gives of dialogue lines in science-fiction films are neither characteristic, "hilarious," nor to the point. "Wait professor, there is someone on the telephone," is so general that it could show up almost anywhere, as could "We must do something about this." The line, "Come quickly, there is a monster in my bathtub," is frankly an insult to the genre. It certainly isn't an example of something that is "wonderfully, unintentionally funny."

Perhaps Miss Sontag's feel for the subject could be sharpened by a few more pertinent reminders: "Professor, do you know your daughter's in that high-pressure chamber?" "Our bazookas are powerless against it, sir." . . . "Governor, call out the National Guard and surround Central Park." "Within 15 minutes after it lands, the Bronx will be a desert."

HAROLD STEINBERG
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I found Miss Sontag's study . . . truly insightful . . . but would like to take issue with her conclusion —that "There is absolutely no social criticism, of even the most implicit kind, in science-fiction films."

. . . While it is quite true that these films do not dissect particular social conditions leading to the fantasied holocaust, nor analyze contemporary society in its specific aspects . . . yet they do evaluate certain prominent features of that society and deplore them. . . .

One of the major themes of these films, for example, is the massive destruction of this world due to some human fault. . . . The *Mysterians* (1959) are driven to seek a new planet because theirs is being made uninhabitable by incessant war; in *The Day the Earth Caught Fire* (1962), bomb testing leads to the desiccation of Earth.

Science-fiction films also contain less apocalyptic, but still vital, themes. . . . A good example is *The Creation of the Humanoids* (1964), which is about the discrimination of bona fide humans against their artificially-created counterparts. The movie could be variously characterized as dealing with the alienation of the intellectuals, the growing importance of technology in the control of human life, or, even more concretely, the problem of race relations. . . .

In short, that all these films do criticize society and even contain an implicit warning to us in their depiction of . . . disaster seems to me undeniable. The spectator in the audience. . . . is being asked to emerge from his apathy, to become aware of the intense and immediate danger, and to do something about it, before it is too late.

MYRON ORLEANS
Forest Hills, New York.

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The Police

David B. Durk & Ronald Reis
Thomas R. Brooks

The following discussion was occasioned by THOMAS R. BROOKS*'s article, "New York's Finest," which appeared in our July (1965) issue.* DAVID B. DURK *and* RONALD REIS *are both members of the New York City Police Department. Mr. Durk, a graduate of Amherst, is a radio car patrolman who has been selected for training as a plainclothesman. He is studying for his doctorate at New York University.* RONALD REIS *has a Master's Degree in public administration from City College. He has been a detective in the Police Department for the past seven years.* THOMAS R. BROOKS *is the author of* Toil and Trouble, *a history of American trade unionism. He writes frequently on civic and political subjects, and is currently at work on a book about the police.*

David B. Durk & Ronald Reis: Because the police play a crucial role in our society, every safeguard should be taken to see that their discretionary powers are used for the enhancement of law and not its debasement. To this end it is incumbent upon the Police Department to provide the best service possible. Thomas R. Brooks, in his recent article, "New York's Finest," has diminished, to the extent of his influence, the possibility of such service, which requires the support and confidence of the community. His distorted polemical characterization of the New York City Police Department demands rebuttal, for, to quote the same speech of former Commissioner Murphy that Mr. Brooks himself cites: "No other agency is more intimately involved in safeguarding the rights of the individual and protecting the dignity of man than the police."

During the last two decades in New York City there has been an extraordinary increase in the incidence of crime, especially crimes of violence. This trend is so well known that it hardly requires documentation. The leading mayoralty candidates in the 1965 election all addressed themselves to the problem because they perceived that public safety has become a concern, perhaps the most important concern, of a majority of New Yorkers. These citizens are not just academically involved; they are worried about their own personal security. But while the crime rate has been rising, the Police Department has been changing too. By any standard, it must be recognized that police service during the past two decades has improved. Policemen are better educated and better trained than they ever were; there has been a very marked decrease in the number of instances of alleged corruption; and when such charges are made they are not whitewashed, but scrupulously investigated. Even the New York Civil Liberties Union admits that the number of complaints charging abuse by policemen has declined. In view of all this, it seems strange that so many people should pick this particular moment to demand closer scrutiny of police activity. However strange, it is nevertheless understandable in the context of the dialogue which has been going on between Attorney General Katzenbach and Judge David Bazelon. As the Attorney General has indicated in answer to the Judge, the purpose of the police is law enforcement and not the remedying of all inequities which may exist in our society due to social, economic, and intellectual differences.

MR. BROOKS has a notion, slightly reminiscent of the standard Marxist orientation, that the police function in the interests of an upper class in order to protect this class against the depredations of a lower class. He states that "the poor suffer not so much from police attention as they do from lack of police protection." This is simply not true. In New York City, as in most other cities, there exists a reasonable formula for the assignment of policemen to a given district. The formula takes account of such factors as size and population, and is also heavily weighted by such considerations as the incidence of felonies, calls for police assistance, and traffic volume. It is a matter of easily verifiable fact that there is a much heavier concentration of policemen and police activity in slum areas than in middle-class neighborhoods. The "better-dressed neighborhoods" do not receive better police protection; if anything, they receive less protection. The reason the "better-dressed neighborhoods" show low crime rates is that the people who live in them commit fewer crimes. Despite our noblest egalitarian ideas, the harsh fact is that the poor commit more crimes than the rich. And doubly unfortunate are the poor, since they are typically the victims. (See Oscar Lewis's *The Children of Sanchez* for a graphic example of the inhumanity of the poor to the poor.)

To suggest, as Mr. Brooks does, that the police follow a policy of trying to contain crime in certain areas so as to prevent it from spilling over into others, is patently absurd. While it is theoretically possible to permit certain vice activities to flourish within the con-

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fines of a well-defined "red-light" district, there is not a scintilla of evidence to suggest that such is in fact the case in New York. Moreover, it is difficult to imagine how such a policy could be carried out with respect to other types of crime. Ours is a fairly open society, and a burglar who lives in Harlem is as free to burgle in Forest Hills as he is in his own neighborhood. Most felons do indeed choose to operate close to home, but this is only indirectly, if at all, attributable to the police. The number of arrests is usually proportionate to the incidence of complaint, and more arrests are made for crimes against poor people than against rich people.

By almost any standard of comparison, then, the poor receive a greater degree of police attention than others do. Furthermore, the poor call upon the police to perform services which would never occur to middle-class people as proper jobs for the police. The poor will ask the police to settle family disputes, to render first aid, to deliver babies, to give legal advice, to fix leaky plumbing, to quiet barking dogs, and to do an infinite number of other things, some bizarre and some commonplace, but in any case outside the technical province of normal police duty. Does all this add up to a lack of police protection or police attention?

MR. BROOKS glosses over the literally hundreds of thousands of arrests that are made each year and which do not excite any comment. Some of these arrests, incidentally, are the products of brilliant investigation and bespeak a considerable amount of good judgment on the part of those who make them. Of course, what one person regards as brilliance another may regard as shrewdness: Mr. Brooks chooses, with subtle pejorative intent, to characterize N.Y. detectives as a "shrewd lot." In addition, without saying a word about the thousands of policemen who are assaulted annually and the many who have been killed in the line of duty, he decides to focus on a handful of unfortunate cases which, at worst, demonstrate nothing more than the exercise of bad judgment. He points out that Detective John Devlin and Lt. Thomas Gilligan were cleared by Police Department trials, and implies that to many liberal and minority groups these clearances constituted a whitewash. He fails, however, to note that both men were also exonerated by grand juries. A grand jury, it should be noted, is not an adjunct of the Police Department, nor is it an arm of the city government. It is an independent body composed of lay citizens selected in a more or less random fashion. Grand juries have frequently conducted damaging probes of government agencies, including the police. A grand-jury hearing is a tried and tested form of citizen review. If its dispassionate findings, based on evidence, do not sit well in certain quarters, this does not vitiate the findings, but merely demonstrates that some people cannot overcome their preconceived prejudices—prejudices which are often based on nothing more than misleading headlines.

To document his case of police abuse, Mr. Brooks cites several isolated incidents, but to anyone with experience of such matters, what he describes simply does not ring true. It is difficult, for instance, to believe that any police officer would be offended by the obscene expression that Mr. Brooks claims incited one police officer to violence. Policemen do not lead sheltered lives. In the milieu in which they operate, obscenity is commonplace to the point where it is regarded as mere verbal punctuation. Furthermore, the particular obscenity mentioned by Mr. Brooks is in popular use among servicemen, and as he himself points out, most policemen are military veterans. What does shock a policeman's emotions and sense of justice is being present as the premise "Let a thousand guilty go free to protect one innocent" is worked out in reality in our courts. (Self-styled liberals and civil libertarians are devoted to that ideal, but when their own families are the victims of crime, they are not usually notable for their loyalty to it.)

Conceivably, one police officer at one time once roughed up a player in a crap game who did not run away, but by and large policemen are rational people and, as a rule, they will be angry with the ones who do run away and will feel in their hearts a measure of gratitude for those who surrender easily and make a chase unnecessary.

MR. BROOKS claims that drug addicts, prostitutes, vagrants, and homosexuals are easy marks for brutal policemen, but he presents no evidence to show that this is, in fact, the case. While it may be true that the credibility of certain people is regarded as greater than that of others, any complaint received from any quarter by police administrators is given a thorough and impartial investigation. Of course, policemen are human and they dislike some criminals more than others. Drug addicts are especially despised, not because they are drug addicts and do not conform to middle-class standards of dress and behavior, but because when they are not ingesting drugs they are committing other crimes —stealing, robbing, and, when necessary, killing, in order to supply their habit. It is axiomatic that to be a "street" drug addict in New York City is to be a thief or a prostitute or both. Policemen are not overwhelmed by the arguments that characterize drug addicts as being sick. For policemen not only deal with the addict, but they deal with his victims as well, and they do not see what is inhumane about feeling more sympathy for the man who has been beaten and robbed than for the perpetrator of the crime. The police also know something that many others do not, and that is that most addicts were criminals and delinquents long before they became addicted to drugs.

Mr. Brooks employs a well-known underhanded device to underline his case of police brutality. He cites portions of an exposé of "third-degree" practices that was published in the 30's and subtly implies that similar methods are being used today. But to policemen the whole notion of employing unnecessary force has been passé for some time. The merits of not using force may be debated by some who argue that it eliminates a powerful deterrent against crime,

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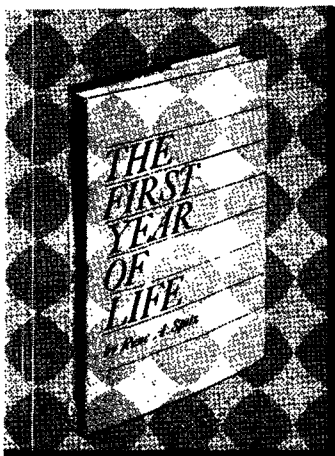

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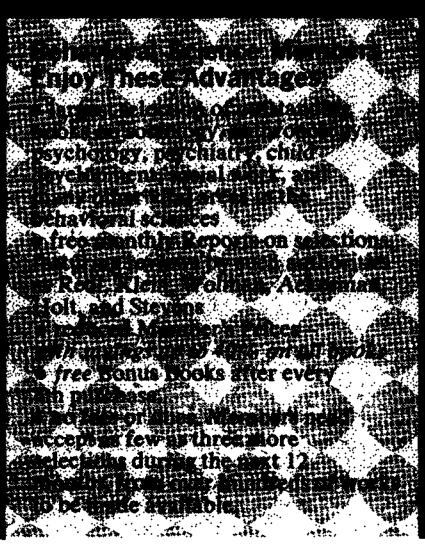

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but as Mr. Brooks points out, policemen obey orders, and the order of the day, since about 1950, has been to avoid the use of force as much as it is legally and practically possible to do so. It was not, however, as Mr. Brooks thinks, pressure from civil-rights organizations that brought this about; rather, it was the result of internal house-cleaning by former Commissioner Stephen Kennedy shortly after a 1950 grand-jury investigation of corruption in Brooklyn had focused attention on certain malpractices within the department.

ANOTHER OF Mr. Brooks's points is that it is difficult to lodge a case with the department against a policeman because police headquarters is hard to find and even harder to get into, and because a complaint takes five or six weeks to investigate and may necessitate a further appearance by the complainant. In fact, however, police headquarters is located in the heart of a busy commercial district and is within easy walking distance of any number of other public buildings (City Hall, the Motor Vehicles Bureau, the Criminal Courts Building, and the Federal Court House). Although its architecture may offend the aesthetic sensibilities of some, it is no more difficult to penetrate than any other office building in the city. Recently, however, it has been necessary to conduct some form of cursory screening as a defense against fanatics who, in an effort to protest alleged wrongs, have demonstrated a penchant for chaining themselves like suffragettes to the building's fixtures and disrupting the ordinary flow of business. Nevertheless, in order to lodge a complaint, it is only necessary to address a letter to the Police Department. Each letter received, no matter how illegible or ill-conceived, is duly recorded and conscientiously investigated. Would Mr. Brooks suggest that police officers be punished or suspended on the mere say-so of any person who fancies that he has a grievance against them? Does he really think that five weeks is too long to investigate a complaint thoroughly, or is he suggesting that policemen are not entitled to rebut charges against them? Is he aware that even civil-liberties groups concede that most charges against the police are sheer claptrap?

HARBORING, as he apparently does, a myopic prejudice against policemen, Mr. Brooks is intent on showing that policemen are brutes who seek out excuses to vent their sadistic impulses on innocent people. "Resisting arrest," he says, "provides the excuse for *indulgence*," as if beating a person were a pleasure analogous to eating ice cream. "Patrol car policemen," he adds, "*enjoy* more opportunity to administer a drubbing." Vagrants, he says, "are *banged* up against a squad car and pushed into the back seat." These, as Mr. Brooks must certainly know, are loaded words, just as he must certainly know that the very word "brutality" itself bristles with implications of savagery and sadism. "Unnecessary force" might be a better term to use, because it encompasses errors in judgment as well as the possibility of stark brutality. But critics of the police always use the word brutality.

Choice of language is one thing, but bad logic is another. By what mental process Mr. Brooks arrives at the conclusion that the walls of detective-squad rooms get dirty from having prisoners shoved up against them, he does not say. He dismisses without an explanation the obvious answer that the walls are dirty because nobody washed them and he gives no indication that any explanation was sought. His assertion is absolutely preposterous. Prisoners when interrogated are offered seats, or, if they are violent, are placed in a detention cell and interviewed through the bars. As a matter of fact, the walls of most squad rooms are covered with bulletins and "wanted" posters. The walls are also lined with desks and are somewhat inaccessible. If they are grimy, as they sometimes are, it is because there is a paucity of maintenance personnel and the walls of the squad room are not high on the "broom's" priority list.

Mr. Brooks castigates the police for using decoys in trapping certain criminals and criticizes the

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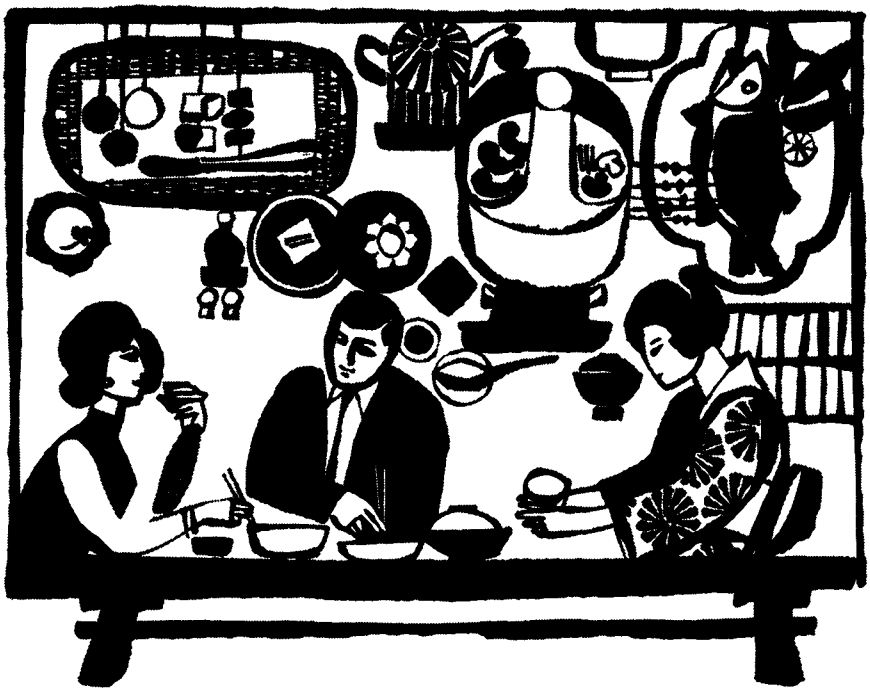
use of certain interrogative methods that employ subtle psychological techniques. His sympathy with criminals can be somewhat tiresome. Defendants, apparently, are justified in using every available sophistry developed by legal technicians, but policemen are unjustified in employing clever, legally bona fide, devices to trap criminals.

APART FROM all this, Mr. Brooks also makes a considerable number of factual errors. He says, for instance, that "every policeman puts in about a year as a plainclothesman shortly after his probationary period of nine months on the force. The usual plainclothes assignment is the vice squad, and the reason that the assignment is made so early in a cop's career is that a new man has not yet settled into that peculiar mold which makes policemen so easy to recognize." This statement is false from start to finish. The New York City Police Department avoids the word "vice." Vice division work is called plainclothes work because it is performed by plainclothesmen. Other criminal investigations are performed by detectives. To become a plainclothesman, a uniformed officer must have maintained an exemplary record while assigned to patrol duty. After a minimum of two years of police service, he may be recommended by his commanding officer to attend a special course of study at the Police Academy. If he successfully completes this course, he may be assigned to a plainclothes division. His work there is carefully evaluated, and roughly one third are sent back to uniformed duty. After three or four years, if his work continues to be satisfactory, he will be transferred to the Detective Division. Actually, only a fraction of the entire force ever serves in plainclothes, and generally only after considerable experience with uniformed patrol.

Another example of Mr. Brooks's carelessness with fact can be found in his assertion that there has been no intensive civilian examination of police conduct since the Seabury investigations of the 1930's. As it happens, there have been several, notably by the New



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York Grand Jury in 1940, the Mayor's Department of Investigation in 1946, and the Kings County Grand Jury in 1949 (the Gross scandals). Periodically, there have also been investigations by legislative committees and agencies such as the State Crime Commission.

But it would take more space than is available to us to point up every mistake Mr. Brooks makes or to challenge every one of his many snide innuendoes. He characterizes minor shifts of personnel as major appointments; he draws inaccurate profiles of what he would have us believe are typical policemen; he distorts the motives underlying police reactions; and he makes no honest effort to present the policeman's point of view. At one point he claims that the police are using statistics to frighten "us" into granting larger appropriations for the police budget (that 90 per cent of these funds goes for salaries and pensions makes it all, somehow, even more suspect), yet it is not police statistics that are frightening "us"—it is the specter of rampaging crime, whose extent, if anything, is *minimized* by the statistics. At another point he accuses police recruits of harboring certain stereotyped prejudices "which were common to their class and background." The fact that some of these opinions are grounded in some fairly solid empirical evidence and that the author himself may be the victim of stereotyped thinking, common to *his* class and background, is not explored.

QUOTING A. Philip Randolph, Mr. Brooks declares that the police should not be an autonomous, self-enclosed, and self-regulating agency, and he therefore recommends that an independent body of representative citizens should be formed to review police activity. But the police, of course, are neither autonomous nor self-regulated. They are commanded and administered by a civilian police commissioner who is appointed and dismissed at the pleasure of a mayor who is popularly elected. Their activity is also subject to the scrutiny of a City Council, their budget is allocated by a Board of Estimate (two bodies composed of elected officials), and they are subject to the authority of the same courts and the same laws as everyone else. Furthermore, the dictates of melting-pot politics insure that city officials will not only be popularly elected but will also be representative of the various minority and ethnic groups which populate the city. But for some metaphysical reason, Mr. Brooks does not consider these authorities to be truly representative of the people, nor sufficiently competent to exercise supervision over the police. Who then, might we ask, would be? Delegates from CORE? Relief recipients? Troubadors? Baseball players? Or perhaps just anyone without either a popular or legal mandate?

Mr. Brooks exaggerates the mystique which he alleges develops among policemen because they all carry a gun, but he is right in pointing out that there are certain problems intrinsic to law enforcement which laymen would find difficult to understand. The same situation prevails in the legal and medical professions, which is why these groups regulate their own houses without a murmur of public dissent. Although it is obvious that doctors and lawyers occasionally abuse their prerogatives, no one challenges their right to regulate their own conduct. But hundreds of busybodies, whose knowledge of policework apparently does not transcend what they might have learned from a one-hour television program, presume to tell the police how to regulate their affairs.

There was a time, many years ago, when the stereotype of dumb and brutal cops may have been an accurate description of the police force. Since those days, however, the police have managed to clean their own house. Today, the department is trying, with considerable success, to become an enlightened professional group. Several thousand policemen are enrolled in various graduate and undergraduate programs under the auspices of the City University. The Department has raised its standards of conduct to the highest in its history, and while it is not totally above reproach, as no large institution is, it is most certainly not deserving of the censure that Mr. Brooks has heaped on it. The time has come for "professional" liberals to stop flogging a dead horse. In fact, those who foolishly promulgate stereotyped images of the police defeat the very end they would profess to espouse, and often serve to discourage altruistic youths who might otherwise consider the New York City Police Department as a kind of Peace Corps in which they would do well to serve.

Thomas R. Brooks: As W.S. Gilbert so aptly put it, "a policeman's lot is not a happy one." I for one would like to see it much improved —higher pay, shorter hours, a lighter work load, more scooters, and the like. But under no circumstances should it ever be exempt from criticism or from public regulation, as Messrs. Durk and Reis imply it should. No other power in a democratic society is as authoritarian, and as potentially totalitarian, as police power. It must therefore be subject to constant scrutiny, open to criticism even from "busybodies," and come under periodic review.

Messrs. Durk and Reis draw a fascinating and misleading analogy between police professionalism and that of law and medicine. Because the police share with lawyers and doctors "certain problems . . . which laymen find difficult to understand," Durk and Reis suggest they should be allowed to "regulate their own house." (Incidentally, do law and medicine really get away "without a murmur of public dissent"? What about some of the things said today of the practice of medicine? It is one thing for a doctor to be subject only to the judgment of his peers when he operates, and quite another when he sets his fees.)

The best-run police departments —and New York City's is one—do enjoy considerable autonomy because historically, through civil service and the like, we have tried to isolate the police from the temptations of corruption, particularly political corruption. Nevertheless, the station house is a public place; policemen are our servants.

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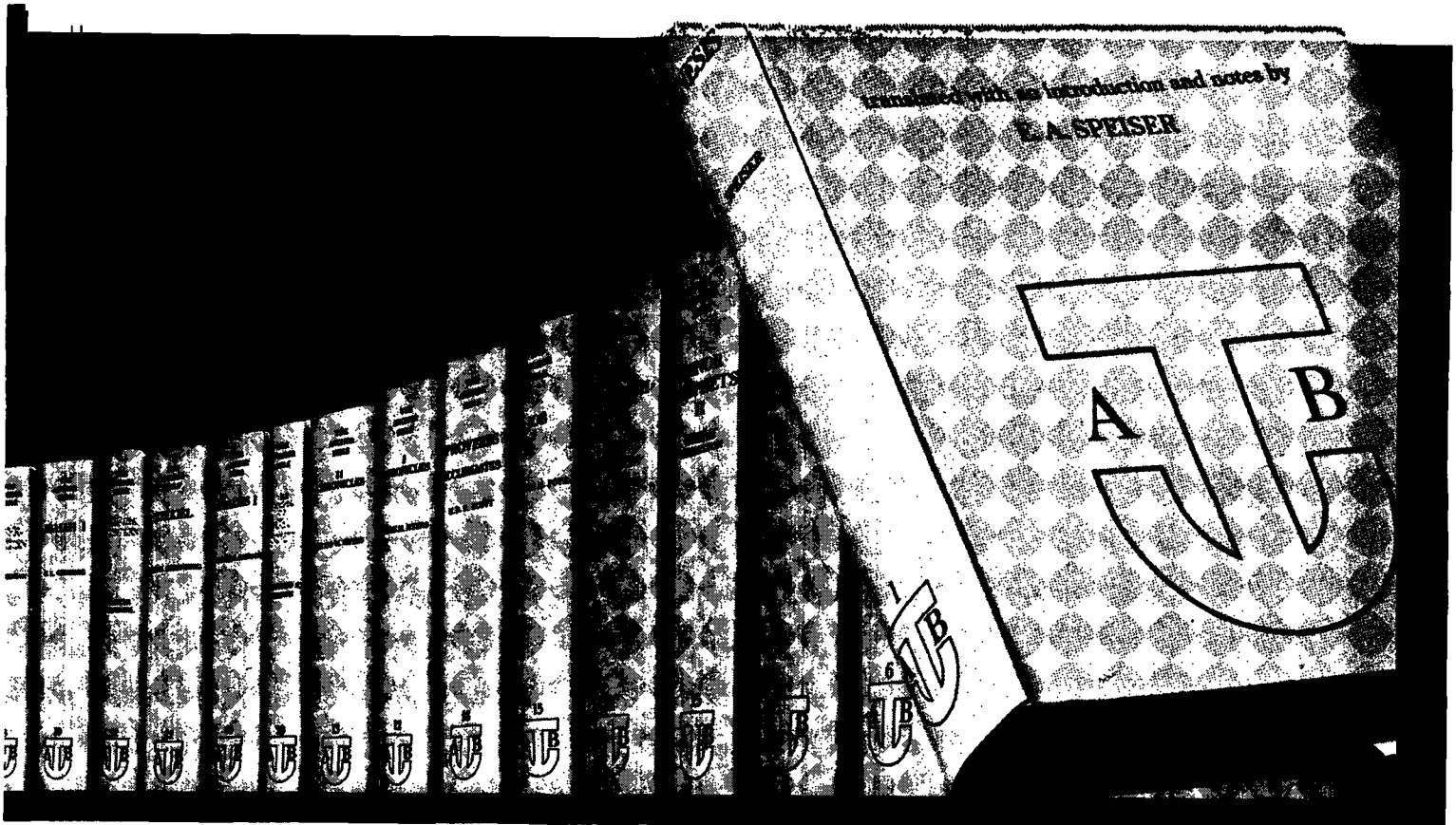

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We, even the criminals among us, are neither their clients nor their patients. Moreover, even if one does consider crime a cancer, an illness, or a virus, the police are not the physicians one would wish to call in to operate on the body politic. With all due respect for detective and police skills, they are not of the same order as those of a physician. Skills of this kind may contain crime, but they will never cure crime.

SUPPORT THE POLICE, cry Durk and Reis, or be overcome "by the specter of rampant crime, whose extent, if anything, is *minimized* by the statistics." Over the last two decades, they continue, "there has been an extraordinary increase in the incidence of crime, especially crimes of violence"—a trend so well-known "that it hardly requires documentation."

Doesn't it? "There is no doubt," says Deputy Inspector Joseph McCabe, head of the New York City Police Department's Statistical and Records Bureau, "that crime has increased. But I am not so sure about whether it has increased in relation to the population." Other special factors enter the crime picture—a growth in the number of juveniles (responsible for about 70 per cent of serious crime) relative to the total population; greater efficiency in the reporting of crime by the police; a rising transient population; and so on. Meanwhile, we should take to heart a recent statement by Police Commissioner Vincent L. Broderick: "There is far greater danger on the streets of New York of being injured in an automobile accident than there is of being assaulted, murdered or raped."

New York City, then, is on the whole a safe city. The police deserve some credit for this, but most of it belongs to the citizenry, who pretty much behave themselves most of the time. The truth of the matter is that the police do not greatly affect the crime rate, for as Chicago Police Superintendent O.W. Wilson has pointed out, "There are many crime causes, such as slum conditions, narcotics addiction, lack of parental responsibility, unemployment, cultural inequalities, and other social factors over which the police have no influence or control."

Naturally enough, the police find this state of affairs unsatisfactory (as most of us do). We all want quick results and the police are able to secure some satisfaction of this desire through arrests. Most policemen are conscientious people, and the arrests are made in good faith. "Of course, the man is guilty or I wouldn't have arrested him," is a perfectly honest police reaction. But a judge or a jury may hold otherwise in the interests of justice and to safeguard the rights of the individual. No wonder the policeman feels frustrated: some aspersion has been cast upon his work, and so he seeks a scapegoat. Durk and Reis write: "What does shock a policeman's emotions and sense of justice is being present as the premise 'Let a thousand guilty go free to protect one innocent' is worked out in reality in our courts." The policeman, it seems, would like to clap the whole lot in jail.

BUT THIS IS exactly what he cannot be allowed to do. "Defendants, apparently, are justified in using every available sophistry developed by legal technicians, but the police are unjustified in employing clever, legally bona fide devices to trap criminals," complain Durk and Reis. No "apparently" about it: under our system of law, a man is innocent until found guilty by his peers, and the accused is entitled to his day in court. This includes the services of the best lawyer he can get. Indeed, if a defendant cannot afford a lawyer, we must provide one for him. (When it comes to legal sophistry, the "people" don't do so badly through our district attorneys, as any lawyer will testify.) All this is elementary, but it would seem from Messrs. Durk and Reis that the police can do with a reminder.

On the matter of entrapment, there is a serious constitutional question as to whether it is legal. In any case, I think it immoral. To entice a prostitute, or to induce a homosexual into making an advance through a decoy, demeans the policeman. Here, though, society at large cannot escape its responsibility. We have no business making homosexuality or prostitution a crime. Soliciting, which can be annoying, ought perhaps to be a misdemeanor. This would require that the person bothered make the complaint; there would thus be no further need for the obnoxious police practice of setting up decoys to make arrests. A change in our laws in this direction would certainly ease the police workload and free the policeman for his proper work.

Incidentally, though New York's Finest now abjure the word "vice," the work of the plainclothesman remains the same—gambling, "policy," and prostitution. The two-year minimum mentioned by Durk and Reis includes a probationary period of nine months including four months of recruit training at the Police Academy. But the two-year minimum before doing plainclothes work is apparently not a hard and fast rule. Not long ago, for example, the Department picked out a recruit for undercover work among civil-rights organizations and the black nationalists. He broke up the plot to blow up the Statue of Liberty and was promptly promoted. However, most plainclothesmen nowadays do take additional training at the Academy. And (I stand corrected) not every policeman is assigned to plainclothes work—though I have yet to meet an old-timer on the force who hasn't put in some time in plainclothes. As the New York *Times* recently reported, "police officials have a vast pool of 'new faces' to use in undercover work." Obviously, these "new faces" aren't much use if they already have a police look.

OFFHAND, it is difficult to say where the line between what is moral and what is not in police work ought to be drawn. The police have been known to set up phony fences in order to trap thieves or the holders of stolen goods: that may be all right; wire-tapping probably isn't. I would like to see the police discuss the general question both among themselves and with the rest of us. Law enforcement by immoral means is no way to build respect for the law.

Respect for the law, too, requires that we take a firm line toward

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those policemen who use "unnecessary force" or "exercise bad judgment." In one of the two cases mentioned in my article and taken up by Durk and Reis, a boy was killed (even if he wielded a knife, that is not an offense punishable by death), and in the other, the wrong man was shot and nearly died. Nothing, absolutely nothing, happened to the officers involved as a consequence of these exercises in "bad judgment." Does anyone wonder that liberals and minority groups consider grand-jury hearings and departmental trials in such cases a "whitewash"?

THE GRAND JURY hearing operates under several limitations. Grand juries often are no more than instruments in the hands of the district attorney; much depends upon how he presents the case. True, grand juries sometimes do take off on their own, but they rarely do so in cases involving the police. In part, this may be due to the middle-class background of most grand jurors, who are reluctant to inflict a *criminal* indictment upon a man upholding law and order even though he is probably in error. Grand juries seem to feel that a police officer should not be treated as any other citizen is in similar circumstances—i.e., arrested and charged. This being so, I cannot accept the Durk-Reis characterization of grand-jury findings in these instances as "dispassionate." A grand-jury hearing is *not* "a tried and tested form of citizen review." It does not determine whether or not a policeman acted brutally, incompetently, or was negligent. There have been cases where the families of police victims have collected large sums from the City of New York through civil suit when they could not secure satisfaction either through the grand jury or through the police departmental trial.

Frankly, I can understand why an authoritarian police department, living on the myth that it is forever engaged in a "war on crime," forgives its soldiers for shooting in questionable circumstances. But I fail to see why the public must accept this. Harlem has not accepted the Police Department's exoneration of Lt. Thomas Gilligan in the shooting of 15-year-old James Powell, nor has Powell's family, which has filed a claim of $300,000 against the city for his death. Deputy Police Commissioner Aloysius Melia, who tried Detective John Devlin for shooting the wrong man, Gregory Cruz, said that that incident stemmed from "tragic" coincidences, including Cruz's resemblance to one of three persons who had actually committed homicide. "It will be most unfortunate for Cruz, Devlin, the community and for this department," wrote Melia in his decision, "if it not be clearly understood how two well-meaning men, going about their business, both innocently, became embroiled in a tragic occurrence."

Well, it won't wash. I sat through that trial and, on the basis of Devlin's testimony, I would say that all the coincidences, except that of Cruz's resemblance, flowed from bad police work—and not all of it Devlin's. Four men were hunting for a murderer, and contact among them was tenuous, to say the least. One was last seen by Devlin "flagging a cab." Cruz was stopped by Devlin *approaching* the building in which Devlin had every reason to believe the suspect was still hiding. After the 200-pound detective lost the 140-pound Cruz the first time, he found him in the hands of a Burns guard, who testified, "The position I had him, he couldn't do anything and he didn't even try." Devlin took the prisoner, saying, "Thanks, fellow," and promptly lost him again. Devlin's last clear thought before the shooting was, "Oh, my God, I'm going to have to chase the guy again." Frustrating yes; but good police work, no.

A SYSTEM that clears men who have obviously been guilty of bad judgment needs changing. Last year, for example, a young man was surprised robbing a liquor store. He was chased and finally brought down by a fatal shot in the back. He had taken eighty-five dollars. After his death, an empty revolver —not fired during the course of the chase—was found upon his person. I submit that the youth's death was intolerable, unwarranted by the circumstances, the result of bad police work. Since the boy was white, the civil-rights organizations, I am ashamed to say, did not protest; since he was a "criminal," no one else did either. But I think the policeman, or policemen, involved ought to have been dismissed from the force. Yet not only were they not dismissed, they were not even penalized.

Of course, such officers and any others who are subjected to civilian complaints about their work are entitled to a hearing. They are entitled to rebut the charges against them, and to cross-examine witnesses through counsel. But we the people are also entitled to present our case. Yet under the present procedures, it is the Department that presses charges, and it is paid employees of the Department who hear those charges. With the best will in the world, there is no substitute in the present situation for an impartial civilian-review board.

No doubt many complaints against the police are unfounded, or, as Durk and Reis put it, are "sheer clap-trap." But this does not absolve us of our duty to correct the abuses of police power, to offer restitution to its victims, and to do right by policemen unfairly accused. Under the present system, a policeman may literally be destroyed by anonymous letters, for everything becomes part of his "jacket." His record is never wiped clean even of charges that turn out to be false. As Deputy Commissioner of Human Relations Joseph Martin told me, "Some of the mud sticks." When a man is up for promotion, he may be passed over if his record is loaded with such stuff. Under current proposals for civilian review of complaints against the police, the individual officer would be guaranteed a hearing and, if cleared, granted a clean record. Thus, even the policeman stands to gain.

SIGNIFICANTLY, when the Police Department last summer moved its Civilian Complaint Review Board to more accessible quarters—201 Park Avenue South—the number of complaints doubled. Even so, and Durk and Reis notwithstanding, the New York Civil Liberties Union believes that many justified complaints against the police are never

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properly aired. As Aryeh Neier, NYCLU executive director, points out:

> While the complaint may be entirely legitimate, there is often a reluctance on the part of individuals facing charges to file a complaint with the Department's own Civilian Complaint Review Board because filing such a complaint will trigger an extraordinary effort to convict the person on the charges he is facing and thereby undercut the basis for the complaint.
>
> Routinely, a citizen who is facing charges will employ an attorney or have counsel assigned to him. If that attorney is experienced in such matters, he will offer his client the good advice that his most important concern should be getting off on the charges he himself is facing and that filing a complaint will jeopardize his chances for getting off. . . . In such incidents, the charges may be resisting arrest and felonious assault—charges which may simply result from a policeman's effort to cover up his own misdeeds and which may help explain the bruises suffered by the potential complainant. The effect is to deter the filing of complaints and thus to reduce the effectiveness of an agency which the Commissioner hopes will bring to his attention violations which might otherwise go unnoticed.

Now, a word or two about dirty walls. The squad rooms were as I described. Interviews with detectives, police reporters, and with people who have been arrested and/or questioned confirmed my initial suspicions: visitors to the squad rooms do come in contact with the walls. Hence the grime. As for offering prisoners seats, I cite the experience of Santos Sanchez, released in December after a year in prison for a murder he did not commit. Sanchez was seated, arms handcuffed to the chair. A series of policemen slapped him and punched him in the ribs. "I don't even remember signing the confession," Sanchez said.

The quality of attention and protection the poor get from the police, alas, is not commensurate with the quantity of policemen assigned to the slums—admittedly high-crime areas. If the police do perform such welcome services for the poor as described by Durk and Reis, why do they feel it necessary to patrol 125th Street in pairs? Bayard Rustin, I think, comes closer to the truth than Durk and Reis: "You have to think of the police as jailers. If you have a ghetto, which is like a jail in which people are to be kept, they end up looking upon the policeman ultimately as responsible for keeping them there." As for the policy of containment, just ask the mid-town, Eighth Avenue street-walker what would happen if she should shift her operation over to, say, Lexington Avenue and 42nd Street. She knows what her limits are.

BUT NOWHERE are Durk and Reis more revealing of police attitudes than when they discuss drug addicts. "When they are not ingesting drugs they are committing other crimes—stealing, robbing, and when necessary killing, in order to supply their habit." All the time? When they are in the money? What about the men and women, believed by some authorities on drug addiction to constitute a large number of drug users, who carry on their business or professions without inconvenience because they are financially able to afford the habit?

"The police," write Durk and Reis, "also know something that many others do not, and that is that most addicts were criminals and delinquents long before they became addicted to drugs." *"Long before"* age 15, the age when most juvenile addicts first take to drugs? Hardly for "most."

"ADDICTS," writes Paul W. Tappan, criminologist and professor of law and sociology at New York University in his book, *Crime, Justice and Correction,* a standard text in the field, "are *not* a problem criminologically because the use of narcotics disposes them to commit criminal acts. Generally they are passive and asocial rather than antisocial individuals. They are disinclined to aggression except as this may be required to secure their supply . . . the addict of lower socioeconomic class is criminal primarily because illicit narcotics are costly and because he can secure his daily requirements only by committing crimes that will pay for them." Theft, burglary, robbery, or forgery—not rape, assault, and murder—are the crimes of addiction. Common sense suggests that legalizing the dispensation of drugs, thereby reducing their cost to the addict, would at the same time reduce crime and its cost to society.

"THE MOST fundamental problem facing the police," writes psychologist Jacob Chwast in a fine study of "Value Conflicts in Law Enforcement" published in the April 1965 issue of *Crime and Delinquency,* "is the integration of what is an essentially authoritarian system into what is, hopefully, an essentially and overridingly democratic social, economic, and political system." Raising the ancient debate over ends and means, Chwast finds that the police suffer from "a confusion of goals and values in their job performance." American democracy, he contends, "is at the crossroads in the relationship of its police to the rest of its members" (which answers Durk and Reis's question about why liberal criticisms are being leveled against the Police Department at this particular time).

It is necessary that the police understand this question of values. The police, as Chwast notes, "must know which values to enforce, which to learn more about, and which to respect and leave alone—even at the cost of so-called efficiency."

YOUNG COPS, an old-timer once told me, "see too much." It's a wise policeman who knows what to see —and when. This is the practical wisdom of the patrolman who daily overlooks countless violations in the interest of "peace and quiet" on his beat.

In the end, then, it all comes down to this: What kind of police force do we want? Do we really want to mount a *war* on crime? Or do we want the police to keep the peace, to discourage crime by their presence? The latter alternative seems to me far more consonant with the principles of a democratic society.

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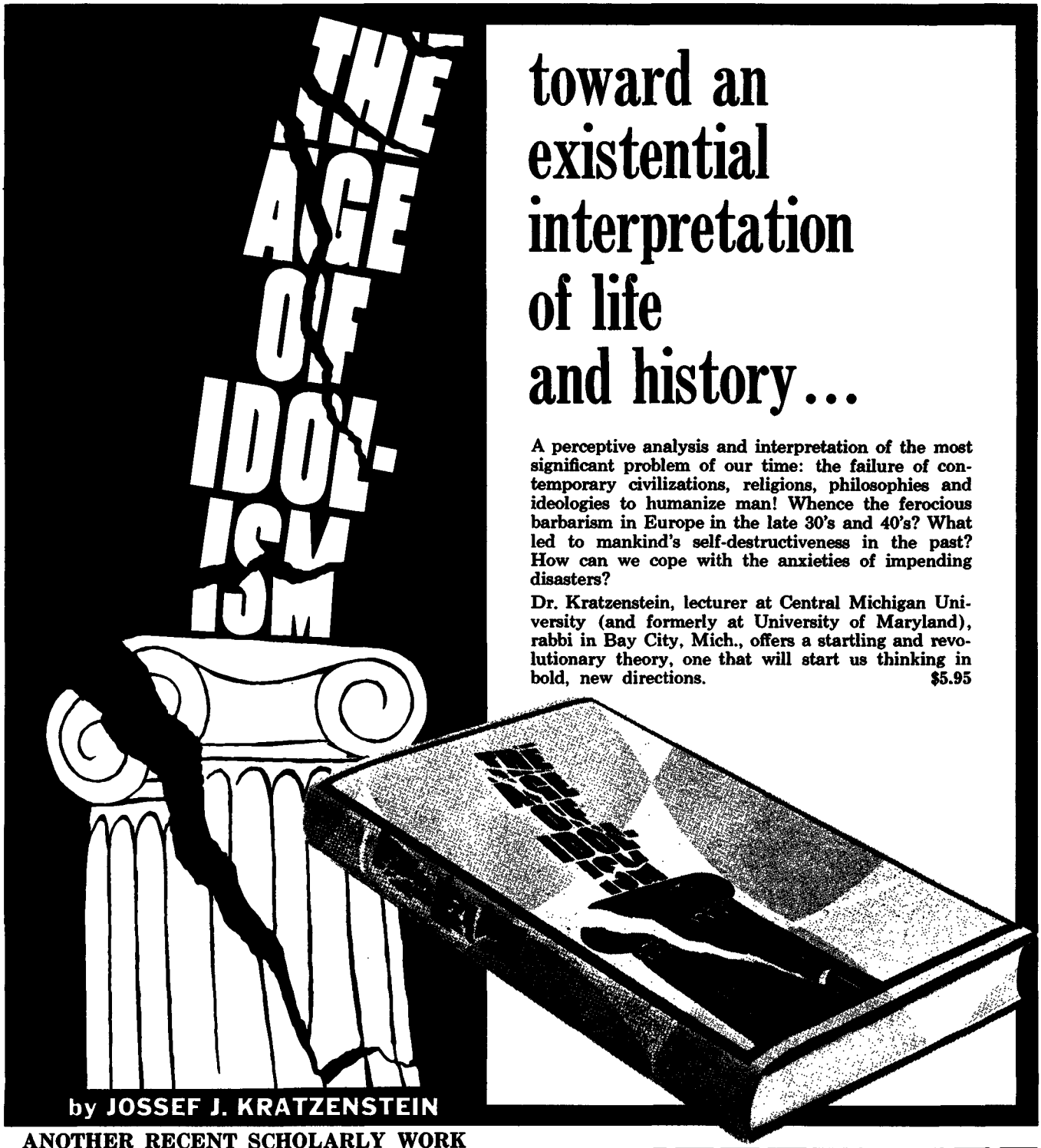

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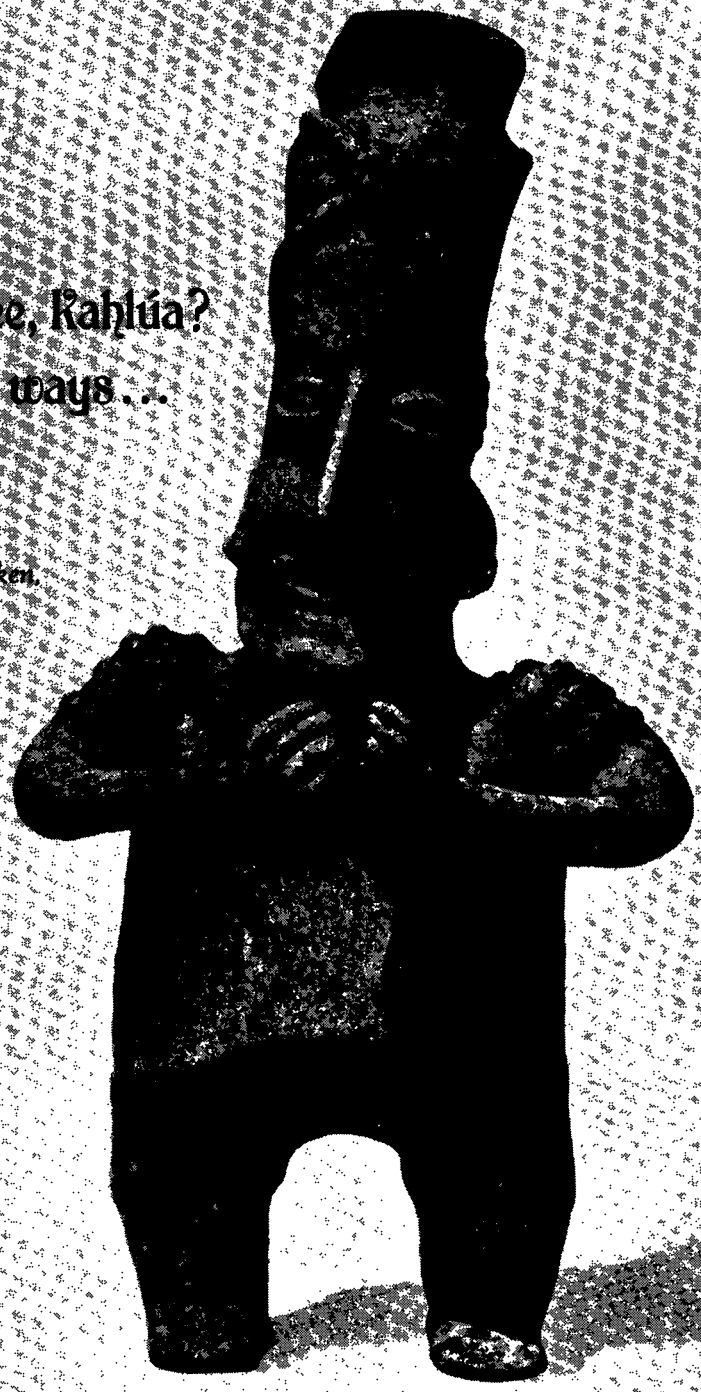

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THE CRIMINAL STATE AND GERMAN RESPONSIBILITY: A Dialogue

KARL JASPERS

RUDOLF AUGSTEIN

On March 10, 1965, while the question of extending the statute of limitations on Nazi murders was before the West German parliament, the German weekly Der Spiegel *published a conversation between* KARL JASPERS *and* RUDOLF AUGSTEIN *on the issues involved in this question. What follows is an abridged version of that conversation (translated from the German by* WERNER J. DANNHAUSER*). The specific question of the statute of limitations was settled on March 25 by a compromise which makes the prosecution of newly discovered Nazi murderers possible until December 31, 1969 (see "Nazi Murders and German Politics" by David Schoenbaum in the June 1965* COMMENTARY*). However, the Jaspers-Augstein discussion remains relevant, partly because it deals with the general problem of responsibility for Nazi crimes, partly because it sheds light on the moral failure of the Bundestag in evading that problem through the March 25 compromise, and partly because Germany will have to face—or evade—the same issue again in 1969.*

KARL JASPERS, one of the founders of existentialism, is among the most influential of contemporary philosophers. RUDOLF AUGSTEIN *is the publisher of* Der Spiegel, *Germany's largest weekly news magazine.*

Augstein: Professor Jaspers, in our conversation let's not even consider the question of whether it is juridically possible to extend the statute of limitations. Likewise, I propose that as far as is possible we leave aside the question of the expediencies of foreign policy, or of political expediency in general. After all, the trials against Nazi criminals are only apparently juridical acts; actually they are political acts that are transacted according to the rules of the penal code.

In another connection, you yourself have said about these war crimes: they are crimes that were determined by the political will of the state, and therefore they are dissociated from the personality of the individual perpetrator. That seems to me to get to the heart of the problem.

Jaspers: If you will permit me, I would like to begin by arguing the proposition that it is impossible to distinguish law and politics as two absolutely separate spheres.

Everywhere in the world, law is based on a political will, the will to self-determination. For that reason, law has two sources: this political will, and the idea of justice. The idea of justice is claimed to be an eternal idea, possessed by no one, which must be approximated.

In a time of great events, when a change in the condition of the community is at stake, one speaks with reference to justice. Otherwise, one always speaks of law as positive or established law, which is supposed to be absolutely valid.

Positive law, recorded in statute-books, applies to the state in which it has been produced; in that state—in free states under what is called the rule of law—it is binding. In every case, the law is valid only within the framework of the currently existing state.

When decisive turning-points occur in history, then law is created out of the political will—as, for example, in the 17th century, with the help of the English jurists—and something is done which activates, transforms, or even overthrows, the existing legal order.

At the moment in which a turning-point in history, a revolution, is experienced, effected, or desired—at that moment positive law is no longer absolutely valid. Once again, rather, the question is: what is to be valid? There is a new decision as to what part of eternal justice will now be recognized as law.

Now, it seems to me that for Germans the Nazi state signified a turning-point such as they never experienced before. The continuation of life after the Nazi state presupposes a spiritual revolution, an ethical and political revolution on a spiritual basis.

Only if we are resolved to recognize that continuity was interrupted in this case—I am not now speaking of all those continuities that nevertheless persist: here, at a point decisive for ethical and political consciousness, continuity was interrupted—only then do we create the presupposition for the political order we now desire. In my opinion, this is the only presupposition that permits one to talk reasonably about politics today.

Augstein: That's clear to me. But let us keep the following in mind. At the conquest of Jaffa, 3,000 prisoners surrendered to Napoleon because

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he had promised them safe conduct. But then he did not give them safe conduct, nor did he have them shot; rather, he had them cut down with bayonets, in order to save powder and lead. And many of these people had their families with them, women and children, who were also cut down with bayonets. Nevertheless, in those days no one would have thought of holding anyone except Napoleon himself responsible for this massacre. Whereas today—because of the number and nature of Nazi crimes—it seems altogether customary and correct to arraign anyone who executed an order to shoot women and children.

Jaspers: But shouldn't one make a most essential distinction at this point? The Napoleon story corresponds to many others of the past. It is the case of a state, as represented by Napoleon at the time, committing a crime. But the state as a whole was not a criminal state.

The decisive point is whether one acknowledges that the Nazi state was a criminal state, and not merely a state that committed crimes.

A criminal state is one which in principle neither establishes nor acknowledges the rule of law. What it calls justice, and what it produces in a flood of laws, is for it a means to the pacification and subjugation of masses of men, and not something that the state itself honors and observes. Such a state attests to its principles by the wholesale murder of peoples who, according to its decision, ought not to be entitled to exist on earth.

The basic principle that the Nazi state was a criminal state has consequences that must be elucidated; otherwise, in my opinion, there can be no clarification of all those problems we are talking about.

Everyone in Nazi Germany was in a position to know that it was a criminal state. However, there is no denying that most people did not make this clear to themselves. As to them, in most cases—though not in all—I speak neither of criminality nor of moral guilt, but only of political liability.

Augstein: Today all men—or let us say all men of good will—see that it was a criminal state. But at that time it took a certain intellectual sharpness and intellectual courage to recognize it as such and to draw the proper conclusions. After all, there were enough things to lull the population to sleep. There were treaties and alliances with foreign states. There were the Olympic games. There were those constant admonitions by the churches to be loyal or even the admonitions to cooperate. There were those blessings over weapons.

Jaspers: These are all incontrovertible facts, unfortunately.

Augstein: From there we come to the point which to me personally seems most problematic.

I ask myself whether the state we have now founded can legitimately punish these crimes. After all, it must give us pause to think that, as far as I know, not even a single judge, not even a single public prosecutor of the Nazi era, has ever stood trial in a criminal court. Law was violated a thousand times—a hundred thousand times. In spite of this, the juridical perpetrators have not stood trial.

When one further reflects about the officials that this state has put up with in its ministries—when one considers the fact that Globke, Vialon, and Hopf were all honorably employed over the years, or are now so employed—then this state's legitimacy appears in a worse light yet.

And when I further consider the fact that the other states—including the state of Israel—also the Jewish organizations—have consciously accepted all this, then the repute of these states and organizations, too, is called into question.

Jaspers: I don't gloss over any of this, but I want to assert one basic principle: the presupposition of all our criticism is the existence of the Federal Republic. Prior to all criticism, we must answer this question for ourselves: do we want this state or don't we want it? If we don't want it, it follows that we prepare for revolution, for high treason. If we do want it, then we must do what we can to improve it. And this means not only to expose the countless examples of what is bad in particular, and of what even today is bad in some fundamental way; it also means to observe what is good, to render it prominent and to encourage it.

An example: a few days ago I chanced to read that Federal President Luebke refused to confirm the appointment of a certain Herr Crefeld as Federal judge. Why? Because Crefeld's past, his participation in the drawing up of commentaries on Nazi laws, had disqualified him, according to Luebke's judgment.

Luebke wanted to force a fundamental decision. As Federal President, does he have the right to check into the ethical and political quality of a judge who has been appointed; or is it his duty to sign, without regard for the man's past? He claims that as President he has the right to check. Excellent. That can open up a new era in the spirit of the Federal Republic.

Augstein: If I may come back to what you said before—that what matters is to make a new beginning with our state and as it were break off the bridges to the criminal state—this leads us to a further argument that is advanced by those who are opposed to the extension of the statute of limitations.

One hears things like this said: it won't do for only the Germans to be punished, and unto the seventh generation at that. A prominent spokesman for this view was the former Federal Minister Strauss, who said that it was "a shock to mankind's

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sense of justice and a falsification of history, because it then appears as if only the Germans committed war crimes."

In any case, I think one has to come to terms with this argument, which undoubtedly expresses an opinion that is current in Germany, though it may seem an undesirable one to us.

Jaspers: The argument would not be undesirable if it were correct. But it fails to recognize the radical difference between war crimes and crimes against mankind (*Menschheit*). War crimes are crimes against humaneness (*Menschlichkeit*)—all those atrocities which are perpetrated against the enemy. A crime against mankind is the claim to the decision as to which groups of people are permitted or not permitted to live on earth, and to execute this claim through the deed of wholesale murder. Today one calls it genocide.

Basically, genocide signifies the execution of a judgment that another group of men, a people, is not to live on the earth. Anyone who makes a claim to this judgment and executes it, is a criminal against mankind. Such actions were taken against Jews, gypsies, and the mentally ill. All who have grasped this (Hannah Arendt first of all) today declare with express conviction: no man has the right to judge that a people should not exist. Anyone who on the basis of such a judgment plans the organized slaughter of a people and participates in it, does something that is fundamentally different from all crimes that have existed in the past. He acts against a principle inherent in being human as such, in the acknowledgement of what it means to be human. Mankind cannot live together with human beings who engage in something like this.

To put it differently: just as in particular states the state attorney prosecutes murder on behalf of the public interest, even when the victim's next of kin do not lodge a complaint, so should there step forth a court of mankind when any group of men slaughters another group. On behalf of the public interest of mankind, men who do or have done this, and only such men, must be punished by death.

The opponents of capital punishment can make a very good case. Likewise its supporters. But it seems to me that even the opponents of capital punishment can be for capital punishment for this crime, which exists in a wholly different dimension.

Augstein: Unfortunately, the crime of genocide has often been committed in the course of history, even if not on such a scale and with such consistent and deliberate planning. If the reports are correct, the Chinese are wiping out the Tibetans.

Jaspers: I doubt that the crime in its unique sense has often been committed. I know of no example. Whether it is taking place in Tibet—that is possible. I do not know. But the recognition that we are dealing with a fundamentally new crime—that I consider the prerequisite for judging the question of the statute of limitations. That question finds its self-evident answer once one is clear about four questions that are intimately connected with it.

First question: What kind of crime? Administrative mass murder, a new crime without prototype in history. This crime presupposes a new type of state, the criminal state.

Second question: On the basis of what law will a judgment be rendered? On the basis of the law uniting all men into one, international law.

Third question: Where is the legitimate tribunal for the application of this law? So long as no tribunal of mankind with proper jurisdiction exists as an institution, the tribunals are the courts of those states which recognize the authority of international law within their own jurisdiction.

Fourth question: What punishment? To the unique crime against mankind there corresponds, after the abolition of capital punishment, the exceptional restitution of capital punishment.

Up to now these questions have not been definitively clarified. To a great extent, we still approach them with the concepts of former times.

But let me come back to our actual situation. Herr Augstein, you wanted to leave foreign policy aside during our inquiry into the question of the statute of limitations. You are of the opinion, as I am, that in this case it would be extraordinarily pernicious to act expedientially. Therefore, let us not go into any arguments from expediency.

But there is another side to what comes under the heading of foreign policy. It is part of being human to heed the serious opinion of human beings in this world. There are already passages in Aristotle according to which the consensus of peoples is not a matter of indifference. A consensus, to be sure, does not necessarily make something true, but it deserves consideration because it may lead us to a truth binding on us.

Today, when we see that the whole Western world is unanimous on this point, we must ask: How did these people arrive at that? What is at the bottom of it? It is probably an awareness of the uniqueness of the crime against mankind of which we spoke.

And now there are before us two pronouncements from two significant tribunals. The French National Assembly has decided for France that crimes of this kind, just because they are of this kind, are in no way subject to any statute of limitations.

Augstein: . . . and has granted amnesties for the abominations of the Algerian War.

Jaspers: That is certainly questionable. But still, it is not a matter of crimes against mankind.

Further: the Advisory Assembly of the Council

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of Europe has recommended that its member governments decide that there shall be no statute of limitations for these crimes against mankind. Obviously, both spoke up in the face of the events in the Federal Republic. They are pronouncements which express what almost the whole of Western mankind thinks.

Augstein: Professor Jaspers, it seems to me you are arguing for an important distinction. Men like Strauss say: "What happened during the expulsion of the Germans from Poland and Czechoslovakia should at least be known to the conscience and consciousness of the world." Now if I understand you correctly, you think that it is qualitatively not the same when a race or a people is destroyed, its right to life contested, as when in the train of outrages, however violent, arising out of an unjust war, people are expelled, perhaps even under conditions that cause many of them to die, perhaps even if many are murdered. That is still not the same thing as the clear intention to extinguish whole ethnic groups. Have I understood you correctly?

Jaspers: Completely.

Augstein: But one hears it said: granted, the National Socialists perpetrated these crimes, and we, in part, executed them.

But what about the Soviets? Didn't the Soviets assume the right to destroy whole peoples, or to transplant them under conditions that are tantamount to destruction?

Jaspers: That, of course, has to be tested and judged from the same point of view. I do not know whether it was that way. I do not preclude the possibility. But "the others too" is a diversion of no account. After all, I cannot make light of my deed, let alone justify it, because others do the same thing. In my opinion, these investigations about what the others did, do not enter the question for us. We are not engaged in a trial of other states, but of ourselves. We desire self-purification.

I think it is conclusive that such terrible things as Dresden, such terrible things as saturation bombing in general, which the English engaged in. . . .

Augstein: . . . or Hiroshima . . .

Jaspers: . . . Hiroshima—that these things are not on the same plane as genocide. When one considers that there were countless English prisoners of war in Dresden, that the English showed no consideration for who was there, then one sees that it was something horrible. But it was an act against humaneness and not a crime against mankind. The principle is different. I hardly need repeat that.

Augstein: No. When we look at all the horrors and acts of terror that Stalin ordered, we still find that he never professed to want to wipe out a whole group of human beings. Thus he never decreed that all Lithuanians had to die, though he transplanted the upper classes into regions where many of them died, so that one could almost speak of genocide. I would, however, say that what he did in the case of Katyn—namely that he had the Polish officer corps murdered—comes very close to the crime we are discussing.

Jaspers: I hold Stalin to be capable of anything. It could be that here is something that would be identical to a crime against mankind. But it has nothing to do with our present problem, that of the statute of limitations in the Federal Republic.

The parliamentary debates about the problem of the statute of limitations are now before us. I confess that I look forward to this event with the greatest expectations and with no small concern. Extending the statute of limitations by ten years, or tricks like shifting the starting point of its application, or other tricks, would be ways of evading the issue. There can be only one opinion: no limitation whatsoever. Anything else obscures the problem.

Parliament is the last hope. Once, in 1933, we said: it is simply not possible that we should be ruled by a group of careerists who are selected by party bureaucrats, and whose professional business is politics, one business among other businesses!

The German people looks to its parliament. Is it a parliament or isn't it?

For the mere professional politician the whole business is not materially relevant, only somewhat annoying because of all the talk about it. For the thinking German it is a revelation of the fundamental convictions of his state.

America protects us against dangers external and internal (such as a *Putsch,* in which case, according to treaty and a happy limitation of our sovereignty, America is entitled to intervene). That is why no genuine awareness of responsibility is arising in Bonn. It is never a matter of life and death, but all too often apparently only a matter of business, advantage, and career.

That it finally *is* a matter of life and death for all—this is never made clear.

Blind feelings and mindless emotions are good for nothing, to be sure. But without passion in clear reason, no human truth is possible. As regards the question of the statute of limitations, a clear emotion, communicated conceptually, is today spreading through the West. Germans like Nevermann (the Mayor of Hamburg) are taking part in this. They think more clearly than many of the people who castigate as emotional those ways of thinking that they do not like, while not infrequently their own alleged objectivity is nevertheless guided by private aversions, fears,

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desires—by bad emotions that they cannot see through.

Thus I hold [the forthcoming decision of parliament] to be an event of the greatest consequence for the inner condition of all of us who are members of the Federal Republic. How it will happen and in what spirit, and with what clarity of expression, will be a gauge of our present political being. If the Germans don't stand up as men and women who really have the will to found a new state, after the fearful things they did or suffered to be done—then it is almost cause for despair.

We will not despair, for there is still a chance. There are the many silent people in the country. We belong to the Western world. In spite of all things that are subject to attack, there is such a thing as conscience.

If we do not get into step with the harmony that today can be felt to exist from America to all the European countries, then we will once again isolate ourselves morally. Notwithstanding all the amenities of diplomats and statesmen toward one another, and all the amenities of individual relationships, there will be a new wave of contempt for us.

When I remember the whole series of events by which we made ourselves impossible in the world, and how, after the terrible time of our complete despicableness, we have, so to speak, now become possible again after only a few years—that is something that could be undone again by one event incomprehensible to the world. During this session of the Bundestag, something will happen along the lines of revealing what we really are. Do you understand what I mean?

Augstein: I hope that I understand you. But let me add something here that seems important to me. If we assume that everything you have said is both incisive and persuasive, we must nevertheless ask ourselves: will there be an encroachment of the rights of the accused if the statute of limitations is extended? I do not now mean this in a judicial sense. Thus I do not mean that a man—though one might discuss this—who has committed murder has a claim to have his deed considered superannuated after twenty years. I mean something else. I mean: could it be that society, in order to liberate itself from the crimes it has committed, picks out a few individuals who were only a shade guiltier than the others, and—to use an old image—sends them into the desert as scapegoats?

Consider the case of a state secretary in the ministry of transportation, of whom some freight cars are requested, and these freight cars were destined to take Jews to be gassed—is that man guiltier than the majority of the people?

The man received an order by chance, and by chance he carried it out, as any other civil servant probably would have; to be sure, he assisted in these administrative massacres. In Munich, fourteen nurses are now being tried for murder because they followed the order of physicians to give injections to patients—as part of the euthanasia program; they were fatal injections.

So I ask myself: are we doing an injustice to individuals, in order to liberate ourselves from guilt?

Jaspers: That is certainly a legitimate question. And basically, in a general way, it is easy to answer: every man can only be accused and condemned as an individual, and not for his membership in an organization.

The real point of view must always be: what did this man do? There are extraordinary differences in the degree of participation in the murders; also in the knowledge of them.

Though today there are many who lie their way out of things by saying that they knew nothing, there are undoubtedly people who didn't really know about it, but who did have dark forebodings that something terrible was happening.

I remember an old Jewish woman of eighty who lived in Heidelberg. She was to be deported, and she had a few days' time until the departure of the transport; she took her own life. Then came the Gestapo man, and when he saw that she was dead, he stepped to the window and said with genuine emotion: We didn't want this to happen, surely.

I am firmly convinced that this Gestapo man had no knowledge, at least not yet, in the year 1942.

Everyone obviously had forebodings of something uncanny happening, and knew that it was a matter of life and death. I myself did not learn of the full extent of the systematic gassing until after 1945.

Augstein: Nor did I.

Jaspers: Nor did you. Obviously, what I know makes a difference. In the case of a single individual it is very difficult to determine specifically. It is difficult to distinguish one case from another.

But in cases where people acted in connection with the machinery of the state and knew what was happening, the official nature of their activity is no mitigation of their guilt, since it was a criminal state. Here there is a parting of the ways. Every human being with a conscience could be expected to have that minimum of conscience that would enable him, even in that connection, to recognize a crime.

Each of them knew: this is a crime. They must have realized that the state itself was a criminal state at the moment that state issued an order to commit a crime. And in the future there should be international legislation so that everyone will know: if I participate in such a state by murdering and organizing murder, I can be sure of one

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thing—that if this state does not conquer the world and ruin mankind, I will be killed.

One cannot recognize it as an excuse that a man acted in the name of the state. He rendered service and collaboration to a criminal state.

But then again you are right if you now say that there are great differences in the kinds of service rendered. These cannot be reduced to a common denominator. Here I would make the first decisive distinction. The sadistic murderers, so to speak, the individual murderers, violated even the instructions given by Hitler himself.

Augstein: That is the simplest problem.

Jaspers: Yes, it is only that during that time it rarely happened that a man was punished for these acts. Nonetheless, one can make this distinction. That is relatively simple.

But it is only a small part. All the other acts are connected with what one calls sovereign acts of state (*Hoheitsakt*), or else with acts committed under the pressure of orders (*Befehlsnotstand*). In my opinion, neither of these concepts can ever be recognized as an excuse. Sovereign acts of state are no excuse, because this was a criminal state; nor are acts committed under the pressure of orders. There is no known case of anyone who had refused to murder or to participate in murder—of saying: I don't want to do this, give me another assignment—of such a person's life being in danger. One risked one's career and comfort. One could be sent to the front.

Augstein: Well, perhaps his life was in danger insofar as he would be sent to the front. Naturally this was a factor for many people. But let us stick with our imaginary state secretary in the ministry of transportation. If he had said: No, I don't want to put these trains at your disposal, for that you will have to find another state secretary; then he would perhaps have been drafted and sent to the front. That would have been possible.

Jaspers: As an aside, may I tell a story that is related to this? A friend of mine, who in 1934 refused to take the oath to Hitler and was dismissed from the civil service, had been a reserve officer in the First World War; now he was to be drafted again. He reported in and he had the good fortune of dealing with a reasonable officer, one not personally known to him. He requested that he be drafted as a simple soldier and not as an officer. He declared that he did not want to evade the common destiny of the Germans but that he could not resolve to give orders. He was not drafted, heard nothing further, and remained unhampered throughout the war.

Augstein: To continue. In what way is the imaginary state secretary different from a field marshal in command of an army group who shuts his eyes when police and SS units shoot down all the Jews in his zone?

Jaspers: That is very hard to say, Herr Augstein. One must create legitimate distinctions, which up to now we do not have to a sufficient extent.

Augstein: Indeed, because there is something peculiar about this. The more a man was a National Socialist, and the more stupidly he was a National Socialist, and the more narrow-minded he was, the more grounds he has for vindicating himself today. It is coming to the point where one takes it into favorable consideration that a man believed in the orders and slogans of the Führer. There are already such verdicts, and even, I believe, from higher courts.

Jaspers: This argument is still a kind of half-affirmation of the national greatness of 1933. Psychologically, it makes sense to designate such belief as belief. But where psychology stops, that is to say where one begins to take Man seriously, there is no such thing as belief in National Socialism; there is, rather, ethical confusion or corruption.

Augstein: There are decisions, even decisions confirmed by high courts, which declare this or that judge to have been blinded by the doctrines of National Socialism and by the legal thought of the time—and this was then taken as sufficient reason for terminating the proceedings against him.

Jaspers: In that case the joke told in 1933 still holds good. There are three qualities: intelligence, decency, National Socialism. Of these only two ever go together, never all three. Either one is intelligent and decent; then one is not a National Socialist. Or one is intelligent and a National Socialist; then one is not decent. Or one is decent and a National Socialist; then one is not intelligent, but feeble-minded.

This joke is not merely a joke; it points to the claims of conscience. If I do not hold these people to be, so to speak, intellectually unfit and thus draw the conclusion that they are unqualified for most occupations; if I do not treat them as though they were really idiots; then I am not justified in deducing any mitigating circumstance from their inferior knowledge and their so-called belief. It is not a belief that deserves toleration if it is translated into actions.

Augstein: It seems to me that the Federal Republic has been most negligent in creating respect for moral laws and that it continues in this negligence to this day, so that only an extraordinary moral exertion can put a stop to it.

I would like to make this clear by way of an example. We have a Federal patent court in Munich, whose presiding officer was Ganser. Dur-

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ing the time of the so-called Government-General,* this man annulled a verdict that acquitted a woman who had taken in an 18-month old child and kept it alive. The child was sent to the gas ovens; the woman who had taken it in was sentenced to death—because of the intervention of this man who annulled the verdict of a special court that, God knows, was anything but hypersensitive.

This man was presiding officer of the Federal patent court in Munich until January 31 of this year [1964]; presumably he will get a full pension. That proves to me that we are moving in a zone of moral darkness, and that nothing can help us but an act of purification . . . for which it may already be too late.

Jaspers: I can only admit how numerous these absurd cases are. But you, in turn, will admit to me that there are also irreproachable judges in Germany—too many of them to count. There are verdicts that have condemned these murderers to life imprisonment.

There is the youth of Germany. When I speak to the young people, at least to individuals among them, I have great hope. I think it is simply forbidden to us to despair. So long as we exist, we have hope. Despair would mean that we acknowledge that we are living in an age in which mankind will in all probability perish, or at least that Germany as a spiritual and ethical force has been lost forever.

What role does the Federal Republic play in world history today? What are its possibilities and duties? How do things look from the perspective of this broad horizon? What can we be if we do not want to be the small remnant of a degenerate population, a remnant used up by history as a mass of capable workers, capable managers, capable soldiers, capable scholars—all of which in itself does not amount to anything?

If we really still want to be something that would be in keeping with our thousand-year past, then we must judge what we do from the perspective of this broad horizon, and in our judgment we must see what is good and encourage it.

After all, those who are making progress on this road—hopefully there are more than a few, only I don't know very many—are often driven to sorrow because they cannot gain any solid contact for their convictions in public life.

But of course public life includes more than just parliament and the government. Where there are human beings who want existence to have a meaning and an importance, who want it to be somehow linked to the ground of things and not to signify something superficial and empty, these human beings must find each other for common thinking, for acting in common. Today they seem to disappear, each one isolated by himself.

But I will not now go any further along this way. In connection with the statute of limitations, I want to make one further point. The situation seems to me to be such that the concept of the crime in question here, genocide, has not yet been sufficiently recognized by us in principle and not yet been sufficiently carried over into the judicial awareness.

Further, it is difficult for German judges to render judgment because the demand is for them to create new law. The great judges of 17th-century England, to whom I drew attention a while ago, were such creators of law.

Today the judges in Germany are being subjected to excessive demands, as the saying goes. To me it seems proper to be subjected to excessive demands. It is part of being human to be subjected to excessive demands. Otherwise the best of which a man is capable is never realized.

Excessive demands are being placed on the judges, namely, what they ought to accomplish they can accomplish only if they have the qualities of creators of law. And with these qualities, if they have them, they can rely on this sentence in the Constitution: "The universal rules of international law are a component of the law of the Federal Republic"—international law supersedes national law.

But where is international law to be found? After all, it is not codified. The universal rules of international law, where are they? If one acknowledges international law, one must constantly deliberate on, and appropriate, the most significant documents of international law and of international agreements.

Creative judges could rely on these provisions and could thus explain why they impose the heaviest penalty, which in Germany is life imprisonment, on actual accessories to murder.

Will we or will we not participate in the unanimous conscience of the West? Will we treat even such things expedientially, indecisively, with tricks, with ulterior motives? Are we laying the foundation for a new mendacity? Or will the seriousness of our political will appear simply, plainly, persuasive in its clear language, in the parliament that represents us?

* During the Nazi period—Ed.

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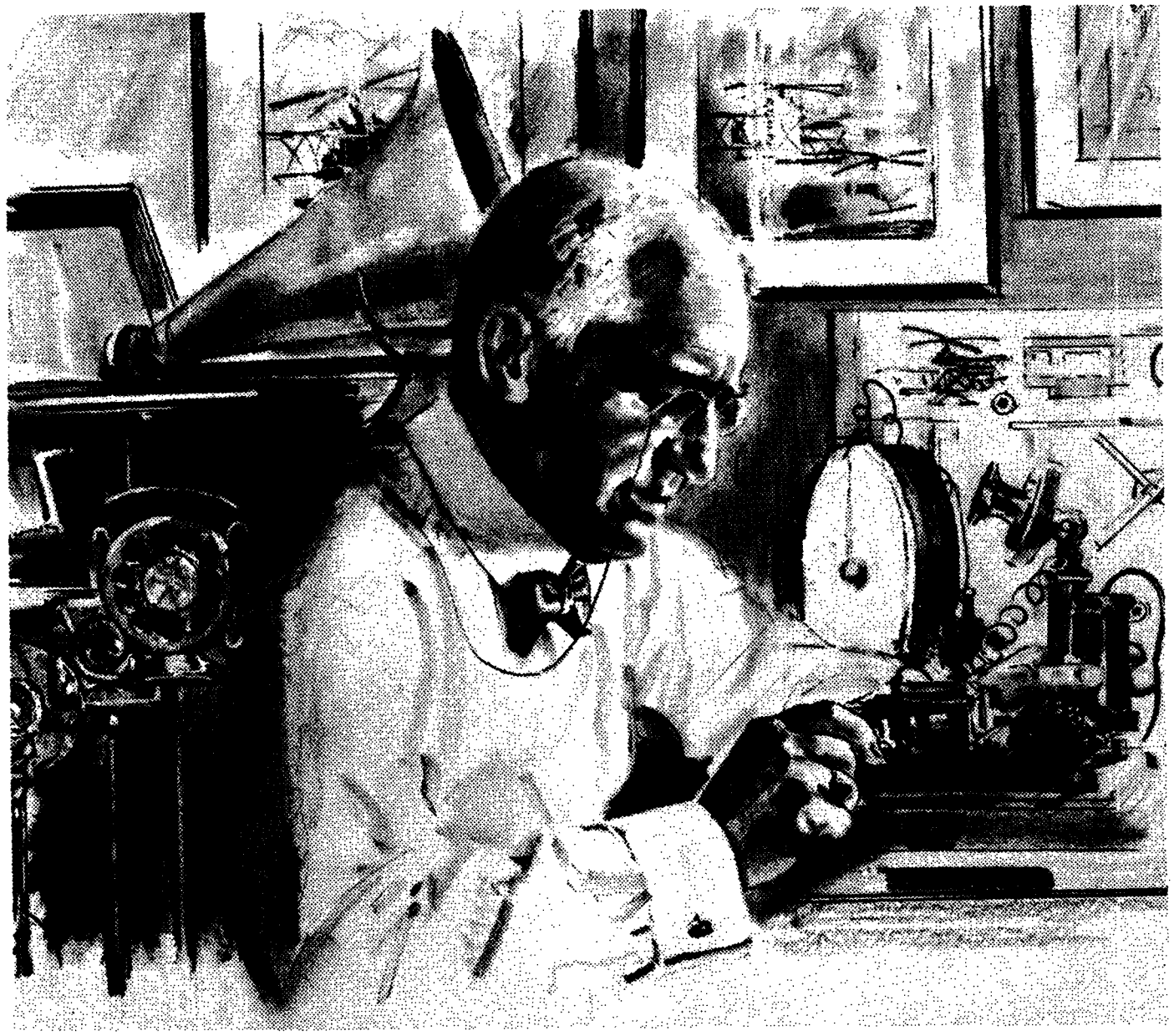

Genius With Sound.

Based on accomplishment, the name of Emile Berliner should roll from our memories as easily as that of Alexander Graham Bell. For Berliner took Bell's rudimentary telephone and made it a workable, perfected device. In fact, the commercial telephone, as we know it, would be inconceivable without Emile Berliner's contribution.

His tinkering with the telephone led Berliner to invent another acoustical device. The microphone. The value of this invention becomes apparent when you realize that the radio, television and recording industries would be silenced without it.

The gramophone is another invention which testifies to Berliner's acoustical genius. The primitive forerunner of today's complex stereo systems, the gramophone developed into the Victor Talking Machine, which brought the great Caruso into the living rooms of millions.

But Berliner's inventive genius was not limited simply to sound. He, and his son, Henry, designed the three different helicopters which made successful flights from 1916 to 1926.

Public health was another of Berliner's consuming interests. Convinced that epidemics of typhoid, diphtheria and scarlet fever were largely traceable to raw milk, he worked to popularize Pasteur's theories. Thru Berliner's efforts, pasteurization received Federal endorsement in 1907.

Having had little formal education himself, Berliner ensured education for others by contributing to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Berliner also showed great interest in the rebuilding of a Jewish state in Palestine.

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JEROME S. BRUNER

THE WILL TO LEARN*

THE SINGLE MOST characteristic thing about human beings is that they learn. Learning is so deeply ingrained in man that it is almost involuntary, and thoughtful students of human behavior have even speculated that our specialization as a species is a specialization for learning. For, by comparison with organisms lower in the animal kingdom, we are ill-equipped with prepared reflex mechanisms. As William James put it decades ago, even our instinctive behavior occurs only once, thereafter being modified by experience. With a half century's perspective on the discoveries of Pavlov, we know that man not only is conditioned by his environment, but may be so conditioned even against his will.

Why then invoke the idea of a "will to learn"? The answer derives from the idea of education, a human invention that takes a learner beyond "mere" learning. Other species begin their learning afresh each generation, but man is born into a culture that has as one of its principal functions the conservation and transmission of past learning. Given man's physical characteristics, indeed, it would be not only wasteful but probably fatal for him to reinvent even the limited range of technique and knowledge required for such a species to survive in the temperate zone. This means that man cannot depend upon a casual process of learning; he must be "educated." The young human must regulate his learning and his attention by reference to external requirements. He must eschew what is vividly right under his nose for what is dimly in a future that is often incomprehensible to him. And he must do so in a strange setting where words and diagrams and other abstractions suddenly become very important. School demands an orderliness and neatness beyond what the child has known before; it requires restraint and immobility never asked of him before; and often it puts him in a spot where he does not *know* whether he knows and can get no indication from anybody for minutes at a time as to whether he is on the right track. Perhaps most important of all, school is away from home with all that fact implies in anxiety, or challenge, or relief.

In consequence of all this the problem of "the will to learn" becomes important, indeed exaggerated. Let us not delude ourselves: it is a problem that cannot be avoided, though it can be made manageable, I think. We shall explore what kinds of factors lead to satisfaction in "educated" learning, to pleasure in the practice of learning as it exists in the necessarily artificial atmosphere of the school. Almost all children possess what have come to be called "intrinsic" motives for learning. An intrinsic motive is one that does not depend upon reward that lies outside the activity it impels. Reward inheres in the successful termination of that activity or even in the activity itself.

CURIOSITY IS ALMOST a prototype of the intrinsic motive. Our attention is attracted to something that is unclear, unfinished, or uncertain. We sustain our attention until the matter in hand becomes clear, finished, or certain. The achievement of clarity or merely the search for it is what satisfies. We would think it preposterous if somebody thought to reward us with praise or profit for having satisfied our curiosity. However pleasant such external reward might be, and however much we might come to depend upon it, the external reward is something added. What activates and satisfies curiosity is something inherent in the cycle of activity by which we express curiosity. Surely such activity is biologically relevant, for curiosity is essential to the survival not only of the individual but of the species. There is considerable research that indicates the extent to which even nonhuman primates will put forth effort for a chance to encounter something novel on which to exercise curiosity. But it is clear that unbridled curiosity is little more than unlimited distractibility. To be interested in everything that comes along is to be interested in nothing for long. Studies of the behavior of three-year-olds, for example, indicate the degree to which they are dominated from the outside by the parade of vivid impressions that pass their way. They turn

JEROME S. BRUNER, here making his first appearance in COMMENTARY, is widely regarded as the leading educational theorist of our day in America. Mr. Bruner is professor of psychology and director of the Center for Cognitive Studies at Harvard. The present piece will be included in his new book, *Toward a Theory of Instruction*, which the Belknap Press of Harvard University Press is bringing out later this month.

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to this bright color, that sharp sound, that new shiny surface. Many ends are beyond their reach, for they cannot sustain a steady course when the winds shift. If anything, they are "too curious." They live by what psychologists have long called the laws of primary attention: attention dominated by vividness and change in the environment. There has been much speculation about the function of this early and exhausting tempo of curiosity. One neuropsychologist, Donald Hebb, has suggested that the child is drinking in the world, better to construct his neural "models" of the environment. And it is plain that a stunted organism is produced by depriving an infant of the rich diet of impressions on which his curiosity normally feeds with such extravagance. Animals raised in homogenized environments show crippling deficits in their later ability to learn and to transfer what they have learned. Children "kept in the attic" by misguided or psychotic parents show the same striking backwardness. Indeed, even the children who have suffered the dull, aseptic environment of backward foundling homes often show a decline in intelligence that can be compensated only by vigorous measures of enrichment. So surely, then, an important early function is served by the child's omnivorous capacity for new impressions. He is sorting the world, storing those things that have some recurrent regularity and require "knowing," discriminating them from the parade of random impressions.*

But if attention is to be sustained, directed to some task and held there in spite of temptations that come along, then obviously constraints must be established. The voluntary deployment of curiosity, so slowly and painfully mastered, seems to be supported in part by the young child's newfound capacity to "instruct himself," literally to talk to himself through a sustained sequence. And in part the steadying force seems to be the momentum of concrete overt acts that have a way of sustaining the attention required for their completion by shutting off irrelevant impressions. In time, and with the development of habitual activities, and of language, there emerges more self-directed attention, sometimes called derived primary attention. The child is held steady not so much by vividness as by the habitual round of activity that now demands his attention. Little enough is known about how to help a child become master of his own attention, to sustain it over a long, connected sequence. But while young children are notoriously wandering in their attention, they can be kept in a state of rapt and prolonged attentiveness by being told compelling stories. There may be something to be learned from this observation. What makes the internal sequence of a story even more compelling than the distractions that lie outside it? Are there comparable properties inherent in other activities? Can these be used to train a child to sustain his curiosity beyond the moment's vividness?

Observe a child or group of children building a pile of blocks as high as they can get them. Their attention will be sustained to the flashing point until they reach the climax when the pile comes crashing down. They will return to build still higher. The drama of the task is only its minor virtue. More important is the energizing lure of uncertainty made personal by one's own effort to control it. It is almost the antithesis of the passive attraction of shininess and the vivid. To channel curiosity into more powerful intellectual pursuits requires precisely that there be this transition from the passive, receptive, episodic form of curiosity to the sustained and active form. There are games not only with objects, but with ideas and questions—like Twenty Questions—that provide such a disciplining of the channeling of curiosity. Insofar as one may count on this important human motive—and it seems among the most reliable of the motives—then it seems obvious that our artificial education can in fact be made less artificial from a motivational standpoint by relating it initially to the more surfacy forms of curiosity and attention, and then cultivating curiosity to more subtle and active expression. I think it is fair to say that most of the success in contemporary curriculum building has been achieved by this route. When success comes, it takes the form of recognition that beyond the few things we know there lies a domain of inference: that putting together the two and two that we have yields astonishing results. But this raises the issue of competence, to which we must turn next.

FOR CURIOSITY is only one of the intrinsic motives for learning. The drive to achieve competence is another. Professor Robert White puts the issue well:

> According to Webster, competence means fitness or ability, and the suggested synonyms include capability, capacity, efficiency, proficiency, and skill. It is therefore a suitable word to describe such things as grasping and exploring, crawling and walking, attention and perception, all of which promote an effective—a competent—interaction with the environment. It is true, of course, that maturation plays a part in all these developments, but this part is heavily overshadowed by learning in all the more complex accomplishments like speech or skilled manipulation. I shall argue that it is necessary to make competence a motivational concept; there is *competence motivation as well as competence* in its more familiar sense of achieved capacity. The behavior that leads to the building up of effective grasping, handling, and letting go of objects, to take one example, is not random behavior that is produced by an overflow of

* For a further account of the functions of early curiosity, see J. S. Bruner, "The Cognitive Consequences of Early Sensory Deprivation," *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 21.2:89–95 (1959).

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energy. It is directed, selective, and persistent, and it continues not because it serves primary drives, which indeed it cannot serve until it is almost perfect, but because it satisfies an intrinsic need to deal with the environment.*

Observations of young children and of the young of other species suggest that a good deal of their play must be understood as practice in coping with the environment. Primatologists describe, for example, how young female baboons cradle infant baboons in their arms long before they produce their own offspring. In fact, baboon play can be seen almost entirely as the practice of interpersonal skills. Unlike human children, baboons never play with objects, and this, the anthropologists believe, is connected with their inability to use tools when they grow up. And there is evidence that early language mastery, too, depends on such early preparation. One linguist recently has shown how a two-year-old goes on exploring the limits of language use even after the lights are out, parents removed, communication stopped, and sleep imminent.†

The child's metalinguistic play is hard to interpret as anything other than pleasure in practicing and developing a new skill. Although competence may not "naturally" be directed toward school learning, it is certainly possible that the great access of energy that children experience when they "get into a subject they like" is made of the same stuff.

We get interested in what we get good at. In general, it is difficult to sustain interest in an activity unless one achieves some degree of competence. Athletics is the activity par excellence where the young need no prodding to gain pleasure from an increase in skill, save where prematurely adult standards are imposed on little leagues formed too soon to ape the big ones. A custom introduced some years ago at the Gordonstoun School in Scotland has become legendary. In addition to conventionally competitive track and field events within the school there was established a novel competition in which boys pitted themselves against their own best prior record in the events. Several American schools have picked up the idea and, while there has been no "proper evaluation," it is said that the system creates great excitement and enormous effort on the part of the boys.

To achieve the sense of accomplishment requires a task that has some beginning and some terminus. Perhaps an experiment can serve again as a parable. There is a well-known phenomenon known to psychologists by the forbidding name of the Zeigarnik Effect. In brief, tasks that are interrupted are much more likely to be returned to and completed, and much more likely to be remembered, than comparable tasks that one has completed without interruption. But that puts the matter superficially, for it leaves out of account one factor that is crucial. The effect holds only if the tasks that the subject has been set are ones that have a structure—a beginning, a plan, and a terminus. If the tasks are "silly" in the sense of being meaningless, arbitrary, and without visible means for checking progress, the drive to completion is not stimulated by interruption.

IT SEEMS LIKELY that the desire to achieve competence follows the same rule. Unless there is some meaningful unity in what we are doing and some way of telling how we are doing, we are not very likely to strive to excel ourselves. Yet surely this too is only a small part of the story, for everybody does not want to be competent in the same activities, and some competencies might even be a source of embarrassment to their possessors. Boys do not thrill to the challenge of sewing a fine seam (again, in our culture), nor girls to becoming competent street fighters. There are competencies that are appropriate and activating for different ages, the two sexes, different social classes. But there are some things about competence motives that transcend these particulars. One is that an activity (given that it is "approved"), must have some meaningful structure to it if it requires skill that is a little bit beyond that now possessed by the person—that it be learned by the exercise of effort. It is probably the combination of the two that is critical.

Experienced teachers who work with the newer curricula in science and mathematics report that they are surprised at the eagerness of students to push ahead to next steps in the course. Several of the teachers have suggested that the eagerness comes from increased confidence in one's ability to understand the material. Some of the students were having their first experience of understanding a topic in some depth, of going somewhere in a subject. It is this that is at the heart of competence motives, and surely our schools have not begun to tap this enormous reservoir of zest.

While we do not know the limits within which competence drives can be shaped and channeled by external reward, it seems quite likely that they are strongly open to external influence. But channelization aside, how can education keep alive and nourish a drive to competence—whether expressed in farming, football, or mathematics? What sustains a sense of pleasure and achievement in mastering things for their own sake—what Thorstein Veblen referred to as an instinct for workmanship? Do competence motives strengthen mainly on their exercise, in whatever context they may be exercised, or do they depend also upon being linked to drives for status, wealth, security, or fame?

There are, to begin with, striking differences among cultures and between strata within any

* R. W. White, "Motivation Reconsidered: The Concept of Competence," *Psychological Review*, 66:297–333 (1959).

† Ruth H. Weir, *Language in the Crib* (The Hague: Mouton, 1962).

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particular society with respect to the encouragement given to competence drives. David McClelland, for example, in writing about the "achieving society," comments upon the fact that in certain times and places one finds a flowering of achievement motivation strongly supported by the society and its institutions and myths alike.* Emphasis upon individual responsibility and initiative, upon independence in decision and action, upon perfectibility of the self—all of these things serve to perpetuate more basic competency motives past childhood.

But cultures vary in their evaluation of *intellectual* mastery as a vehicle for the expression of competence. Freed Bales, for example, in comparing Irish and Jewish immigrant groups in Boston, remarks that the Jewish, much more than the Irish, treat school success and intellectuality as virtues in their own right as well as ways of upward mobility.† The reasons can be found in history. Herzog and Zborowski, in their book on Eastern European Jewish communities, suggest that the barrier erected against Jews' entering other professions may have helped foster the cultivation of intellectual excellence as a prized expression of competence.**

A culture does not "manage" these matters consciously by the applications of rewards and reproofs alone. The son of the rabbi in the eastern European *shtetl* was not punished if he wished to become a merchant rather than a Talmudic scholar, and, indeed, if he chose to become the latter he typically went through long, extrinsically unrewarding, and arduous training to do so. More subtle forces are at work, all of them fairly familiar but too often overlooked in discussing education.

One of them is "approval." The professional man is more "respected" than the manual worker. But that scarcely exhausts the matter. Respected by whom? Contemporary sociologists speak of the approval of one's "reference group"—those to whom one looks for guides to action, for the definition of the possible, for ultimate approbation. But what leads *this* individual to look to *that* particular reference group?

WHAT APPEARS to be operative is a process we cavalierly call identification. The fact of identification is more easily described than explained. It refers to the strong human tendency to model one's "self" and one's aspirations upon some other person. When we feel we have succeeded in "being like" an identification figure, we derive pleasure from the achievement and, conversely, we suffer when we have "let him down." Insofar as the identification figure is also "a certain kind of person"—belongs to some group or category—we extend our loyalties from an individual to a reference group. In effect, then, identification relates one not only to individuals, but to one's society as well.

While this account is oversimplified, it serves to underline one important feature of identification as a process—its self-sustaining nature. For what it accomplishes is to pass over to the learner the control of punishment and reward. Insofar as we now carry our standards with us, we achieve a certain independence from the immediate rewards and punishments meted out by others.

It has been remarked by psychologists that identification figures are most often those who control the scarce psychological resources that we most desire—love, approval, sustenance. Let me skip this issue for a moment and return to it later.

THE TERM IDENTIFICATION is usually reserved for those strong attachments where there is a considerable amount of emotional investment. But there are "milder" forms of identification that are also important during the years of childhood and after. Perhaps we should call those who serve in these milder relationships "competence models." They are the "on the job" heroes, the reliable ones with whom we can interact in some way. Indeed, they control a rare resource, some desired competence, but what is important is that the resource is attainable by interaction. The "on the job" model is nowhere better illustrated than in the manner in which the child learns language from a parent. The tryout-correction-revision process continues until the child comes to learn the rules whereby sentences are generated and transformed appropriately. Finally he develops a set of productive habits that enable him to be his own sentence maker and his own corrector. He "learns the rules of the language." The parent is the model who, by interaction, teaches the skill of language.

In the process of teaching a skill the parent or teacher passes on much more. The teacher imparts attitudes toward a subject and, indeed, attitudes toward learning itself. What results may be quite inadvertent. Often, in our schools, for example, this first lesson is that learning has to do with remembering things when asked, with maintaining a certain undefined tidiness in what one does, with following a train of thought that comes from outside rather than from within, and with honoring right answers. Observant anthropologists have suggested that the basic values of the early grades are a stylized version of the feminine role in the society, cautious rather than daring, governed by a ladylike politeness.

One recent study by Pauline Sears underlines

* David C. McClelland, *The Achieving Society* (Princeton, N.J.: Van Nostrand, 1961).

† R. Freed Bales, "The 'Fixation Factor' in Alcohol Addiction: A Hypothesis Derived from a Comparative Study of Irish and Jewish Social Norms," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Harvard University, 1944.

** Mark Zborowski and Elizabeth Herzog, *Life Is with People: The Jewish Little-Town of Eastern Europe* (New York: International Universities Press, 1952).

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the point.* It suggests that girls in the early grades, who learn to control their fidgeting earlier and better than boys, are rewarded for excelling in their "feminine" values. The reward can be almost too successful, so that in later years it is difficult to move girls beyond the orderly virtues they learned in their first school encounters. The boys, more fidgety in the first grade, get no such reward and as a consequence may be freer in their approach to learning in later grades. Far more would have to be known about the other conditions in the lives of these children to draw a firm conclusion from the findings, but they are nonetheless suggestive. There are surely many ways to expand the range of competence models available to children. One is the use of a challenging master teacher, particularly in the early grades. And there is film or closed-circuit television, opening up enormously the range of teachers to whom the student can be exposed. Filmed teaching has, to be sure, marked limits, for the student cannot interact with an image. But a kind of pseudo-interaction can be attained by including in the television lesson a group of students who are being taught right on the screen, with whom the student can make common cause. Team teaching provides still another approach to the exemplification of a range of competences, particularly if one of the teachers is charged specially with the role of gadfly. None of the above is yet a tried practice, but pedagogy, like economics and engineering, often must try techniques to find not only whether they work, but how they may be made to work.

I would like to suggest that what the teacher must be, to be an effective competence model, is a day-to-day working model with whom to interact. It is not so much that the teacher provides a model to *imitate*. Rather, it is that the teacher can become a part of the student's internal dialogue—somebody whose respect he wants, someone whose standards he wishes to make his own. It is like becoming a speaker of a language one shares with somebody. The language of that interaction becomes a part of oneself, and the standards of style and clarity that one adopts for that interaction become a part of one's own standards.

Finally, a word about one last intrinsic motive that bears closely upon the will to learn. Perhaps it should be called reciprocity, For it involves a deep human need to respond to others and to operate jointly with them toward an objective. One of the important insights of modern zoology is the importance of this intraspecies reciprocity for the survival of individual members of the species. The psychologist Roger Barker† has commented that the best way he has found to predict the behavior of the children whom he has been studying in great detail in the midst of their everyday activities is to know their situations. A child in a baseball game behaves baseball; in the drugstore the same child behaves drugstore. Situations have a demand value that appears to have very little to do with the motives that are operative. Surely it is not simply a "motive to conform"; this is too great an abstraction. The man who is regulating his pressure on the back of a car, along with three or four others, trying to "rock it out," is not so much conforming as "fitting his efforts into an enterprise." It is about as primitive an aspect of human behavior as we know.

Like the other activities we have been discussing, its exercise seems to be its sole reward. Probably it is the basis of human society, this response through reciprocity to other members of one's species. Where joint action is needed, where reciprocity is required for the group to attain an objective, then there seem to be processes that carry the individual along into learning, sweep him into a competence that is required in the setting of the group. We know precious little about this primitive motive to reciprocate, but what we do know is that it can furnish a driving force to learn as well. Human beings (and other species as well) fall into a pattern that is required by the goals and activities of the social group in which they find themselves. "Imitation" is not the word for it, since it is usually not plain in most cases what is to be imitated. A much more interesting way of looking at what is involved is provided by the phenomenon of a young child learning to use the pronouns "I" and "you" correctly. The parent says to the child, "You go to bed now." The child says, "No, you no go to bed." We are amused. "Not *me* but *you*," we say. In time, and after a surprisingly brief period of confusion, the child learns that "you" refers to himself when another uses it, and to another person when he uses it—and the reverse with "I." It is a prime example of reciprocal learning. It is by much the same process that children learn the beautifully complicated games they play (adult and child games alike), that they learn their role in the family and in school, and finally that they come to take their role in the greater society.

The corpus of learning, using the word now as synonymous with knowledge, is reciprocal. A culture in its very nature is a set of values, skills, and ways of life that no one member of the society masters. Knowledge in this sense is like a rope, each strand of which extends no more than a few inches along its length, all being intertwined to give a solidity to the whole. The conduct of our educational system has been curiously blind to this interdependent nature of knowledge. We have "teachers" and "pupils," "experts" and "laymen." But the community of learning is somehow overlooked.

* Pauline Sears, "Attitudinal and Affective Factors Affecting Children's Approaches to Problem Solving," in J. S. Bruner, ed., *Learning about Learning* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Office of Education, in press).

† Roger Barker, "On the Nature of the Environment," *Journal of Social Issues*, 19.4:17–38 (1963).

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What can most certainly be encouraged—and what is now being developed in the better high schools—is something approximating the give and take of a seminar in which discussion is the vehicle of instruction. This is reciprocity. But it requires recognition of one critically important matter: you cannot have both reciprocity and the demand that everybody learn the same thing or be "completely" well rounded in the same way all the time. If reciprocally operative groups are to give support to learning by stimulating each person to join his efforts to a group, then we shall need tolerance for the specialized roles that develop—the critic, the innovator, the second helper, the cautionary. For it is from the cultivation of these interlocking roles that the participants get the sense of operating reciprocally in a group. Never mind that this pupil for this term in this seminar has a rather specialized task to perform. It will change. Meanwhile, if he can see how he contributes to the effectiveness of the group's operations on history or geometry or whatnot, he is likely to be the more activated. And surely one of the roles that will emerge is that of auxiliary teacher—let it, encourage it. It can only help in relieving the tedium of a classroom with one expert up here and the rest down there.

At the risk of being repetitious, let me restate the argument. It is this. The will to learn is an intrinsic motive, one that finds both its source and its reward in its own exercise. The will to learn becomes a "problem" only under specialized circumstances like those of a school, where a curriculum is set, students confined, and a path fixed. The problem exists not so much in learning itself, but in the fact that what the school imposes often fails to enlist the natural energies that sustain spontaneous learning—curiosity, a desire for competence, aspiration to emulate a model, and a deep-sensed commitment to the web of social reciprocity. Our concern has been with how these energies may be cultivated in support of school learning. If we know little firmly, at least we are not without reasonable hypotheses about how to proceed. The practice of education does, at least, produce interesting hypotheses. After all, the Great Age of Discovery was made possible by men whose hypotheses were formed before they had a decent technique for measuring longitude.

You will have noted by now a considerable deemphasis of "extrinsic" rewards and punishments as factors in school learning. There has been in these pages a rather intentional neglect of the so-called Law of Effect, which holds that a reaction is more likely to be repeated if it has previously been followed by a "satisfying state of affairs." I am not unmindful of the notion of reinforcement. It is doubtful, only, that "satisfying states of affairs" are *reliably* to be found outside learning itself—in kind or harsh words from the teacher, in grades and gold stars, in the absurdly abstract assurance to the high school student that his lifetime earnings will be better by 80 per cent if he graduates. External reinforcement may indeed get a particular act going and may even lead to its repetition, but it does not nourish, reliably, the long course of learning by which man slowly builds in his own way a serviceable model of what the world is and what it can be.

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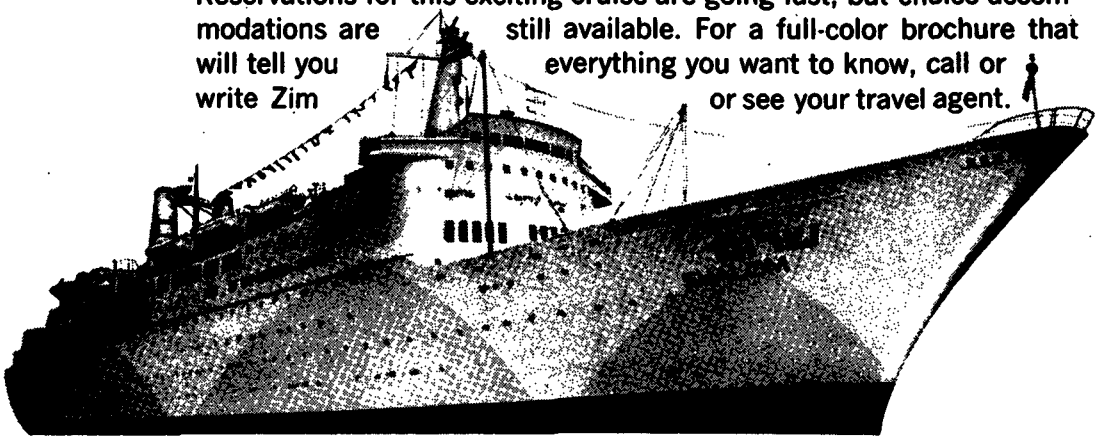

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DAN WAKEFIELD

INCIDENT IN JERUSALEM

THE INTERIOR of the Hotel Petra, in the Old City section of Jerusalem, had the look of a deserted penny arcade. Above the door was an arch made of alternate red, green, and clear glass panels in the fan-like arrangement that used to decorate the fronts of old nickelodeons. The large colored picture of King Hussein in military uniform that hung on the wall at the end of the large main room could easily have been imagined as the prize to be won for knocking all the milk bottles down in a single pitch. Below it was an expanse of floor made of square white tiles that had been badly scuffed during the five years following the Israel-Arab war when the Hotel Petra was occupied by the Jordanian National Guard. The front desk where the manager sat and the tables at the rear that composed the "dining room" seemed to have been moved in for temporary storage, and failed to make the place look any less empty.

The guests who had come to the Petra for the Easter holidays were religious pilgrims of two varieties: those who had found no room at the hostels and decided to make an exception and "splurge" since it was, after all, a once-in-a-lifetime visit; and those who had found no room at the first-class hotels and decided to make an exception and "rough it," for the same reason. When I booked a room at the Petra for the Easter holidays I fell, at least financially, into the first category of pilgrims, for I went there only after learning that the previously recommended Anglican hospice was filled to capacity. Strictly speaking, though, I was really in neither category, for I was not a bona-fide "pilgrim" at all. I had come to Israel on several free-lance writing assignments, and I wanted to cross the border in order to "see the other side," and one Arab village in particular about which I was doing a story. This village is half in Israel and half in Jordan, divided down the middle by the 1949 armistice line. To go as a reporter through the Mandelbaum Gate, which serves as the frontier crossing between the Israeli and Jordanian sections of Jerusalem, would have meant being prohibited from returning to Israel again, except by way of Cyprus. As a Christian "religious pilgrim," however, I could go for four days during the Easter season and come back through the Mandelbaum Gate to the Israeli sector of Jerusalem. This procedure required a certain modification of the truth, but I eased my conscience with the thought that it would serve as some compensation for those long morning hours I had once sacrificed to the Baptist Sunday School in Indianapolis. My application was made and granted, and on the Thursday morning before Easter, after finding there was no more room at the Anglican hospice, I dropped my bag at the Petra.

A group of pilgrims who had arrived before me was huddled around a small coal stove at the front of the hotel, trying to get warm and waiting for the rain to stop. It had started the day before, spoiling the traditional sun-baked appearance of the Old City, and there was still no sign of a letup. I was soaked to the skin from having wandered about looking for the hotel without a guide, and since I was also anxious to look like one of the pilgrims, I joined the group around the stove. A thin, thirtyish man in wrinkled brown slacks and a gray checked double-breasted jacket, who introduced himself as "an interdenominational missionary" had taken the opportunity to say a few words. He was explaining that Judaism and Islam were at the heart of the misunderstanding between Israel and her Arab neighbors, and only a genuine Christian revival could save the Middle East.

The men in the impromptu audience inspected their fingernails, the women coughed daintily, but the speaker's pale, pinched face remained transfixed. He elaborated, gestured, quoted the Scriptures, repeated himself over and over while the pilgrims sat, unmoved and unmoving, trapped by the rain and the hesitant politeness of strangers who have just been introduced. It was only when the speaker seemed about to catch fire that the affair broke up. The tail of his sagging jacket, which had been partially draped across the top of the stove, began, suddenly, to smoke. A lady screamed, and the audience saw its chance. Chairs were scraped back, exclamations were made, tongues were clicked, and the pilgrims hastily retreated to their separate rooms.

DAN WAKEFIELD's next book, *Between the Lines*, will be published by New American Library this spring. It consists of a selection of Mr. Wakefield's articles and essays published over the past ten years, within the framework of a first-person narrative.

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By then, I imagined, I had established myself as an authentic pilgrim, and could risk going about my real business. I turned to the desk where the manager sat, and sized him up as a true native, but sufficiently "Westernized" for one to find some common ground with him. He had the rich, dark complexion of the Arabs, the slim, black mustache of the Arabs, and the tweed suit and short-sleeved sweater of the Imperialists. He looked about thirty years old, and the paunch at his waist was just large enough to make him seem comfortable—and safe. I smiled and asked him how long it took to get to Amman.

"Please, have a seat," he said.

He pushed an extra chair from behind the desk and I sat down while he looked me over.

"There is no holy place in Amman," he said. "Why you want to go to Amman?"

"Well, it's the capital of Jordan, after all. I can only be here a short time and I want to see your country, and—"

"How long are you here?"

"Just for four days."

"Four days? Why not longer?"

"Well, that's all the time I'm allowed to stay. I came over from Israel this—"

The manager's face contorted as if I had jabbed him in the stomach. He no longer looked comfortable—or safe.

"From where have you come?" he asked.

I tried to make the answer sound nonchalant, but it wouldn't come out that way. "Israel," I said, my voice cracking.

"Ah," said the manager, "You've been over in Jewish-held territory."

"I guess I have," I said.

"Why do you go over there?"

I shrugged. "Just trying to see the world, that's all."

"How long are you there?"

"Well, I've been there about a month now, I think."

"A month!"

The manager looked at me as if I'd just confessed to being David Ben-Gurion's nephew.

"Maybe three weeks," I said.

"You like it with the Jews, ah?"

"I'm just traveling, mostly."

"American?"

"Yes."

A sudden but not quite wholehearted smile opened up on the manager's face.

"I know the Americans well," he said. "I used to work for Aramco in Saudi Arabia."

"What do you know!"

My relief was so great I had to restrain myself from saying, "It's a small world."

"I worked four years for Aramco," the manager said, "and I made $250 a month. Americans who did the same work I did make $600 a month."

"Really?"

"Yes. And if one of us Arabs who worked there looked at an American girl—" he stopped, grimaced, and flicked an imaginary fly from his sleeve. "Like that—we were fired."

I laughed uneasily and suggested that American girls might not be worth the trouble.

"You married?" asked the manager.

"Not yet."

"You have a girl—on the Jewish side?" he asked.

"Oh no. My girl's in New York."

The chair bumped forward again and my inquisitor was staring me straight in the face.

"There are three million Jews in New York," he said. "Maybe your girl is a Jew?"

"Roman Catholic," I said, and in my eagerness I almost added, "she's a nun."

"That's nice," said the manager, and there was a moment of silent suspicion before he smiled again and said, "Maybe you like to buy her a cross. My friend has a nice souvenir shop here."

"A cross?" I said.

"A cross," said the manager. "All Christian girls like crosses."

"Well, I don't have much money."

"We have very cheap crosses."

I looked at him and he looked at me and there was a moment when we both understood that I was about to be the purchaser of a cross.

The Canavati and Sons Oriental Souvenir Shop, "wholesale and retail, manufacturers of Stars, Crosses, Compacts, Earrings, Holy Bibles, Rosaries, Frames, Brooches, Medals, Cigarette Cases, Lighters, Camels, Crusader's Jackets, Oriental and Real Jewelry, Rings, Antiquities, Ikons, Silver Spoons, Old Daggers, etc . . ." was happy to receive a customer. A handsome young man came forward with eagerly clasped hands, and my manager friend said, "He'd like to see some crosses."

"Crosses—of course!" and the counter was soon spangled with gold crosses inlaid with glass stones, mother-of-pearl crosses draped with silver figures of the agonized Christ, and china crosses clustered with pink-petalled flowers. I moved several of them here and there on the counter like chessmen and the sales clerk showed his teeth and asked, "English?"

"American," the manager answered for me.

"A-mer-i-can," the clerk said. "Sooo—. Perhaps a cloth of Damascus silk?" and a roll of gold and silver yard-goods was flung in my face.

"Just a cross, I think," said the Petra manager.

"I'm afraid I don't have much money," I said.

"Ahh," said the clerk, rolling back the cloth, "I thought perhaps—Americans you know, they are not so much interested any more in religious objects."

He leaned across the counter and whispered confidingly, "We are only a small shop, and we do not depend on Americans. They usually want something very expensive. We usually depend on religious pilgrims."

"Americans, English, it's all the same," said an

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Arab *effendi* in a red fez who stood at the entrance to the shop rolling a cigarette. "They made the trouble in this part of the world."

The hotel manager nodded in agreement. "It is right, they made the state of the Jews, and that made the war and the killing we have."

The *effendi,* still staring at the street, spat out a bit of tobacco and remarked, "The trouble here, it is all between English and Americans. This is their sport."

I picked up the smallest of the crosses and asked the price.

"Only 15 piasters, sir," said the waiter.

I paid and the hotel manager smiled and said, "I am sure she will like it."

Bearing my cross of respectability (which is after all not so unreasonable at 15 piasters), I asked the hotel manager for directions to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, just for good measure, and set off into the maze of high-walled streets that run in dark and tangled profusion behind the gates of the Old City. Every street within the gates is dark, but some, like the one I had entered, are darker than the rest, arched with cement extensions of the walls, only letting in the sky at odd intervals where circular holes occur. It was almost noon and the street was thick with shadows, bearded beggars, Arab Legionnaires in their red and white checkered *kafias,* and Moslem women wearing black dresses and black shawls, their heads and faces covered by black veils, moving through the unmindful crowd like apparitions. After walking up and down and into and out of these streets that look so much like one another, lined with fruit markets and open shops selling silk goods, alive with the same sharp odors, loud with the same cries to tourists—"Hello—Hey you—one dollar!"—the eventual exit to a wider world at Damascus Gate was like coming to the last page of a Kafka novel.

EN ROUTE to Amman I shared a communal cab with two sleeping merchants, a doctor from Beirut, and the *mukhtar* of a village who was going to the capital to sue his cousin, who had added two extra zeros to an IOU for six pounds. I was seated between the doctor and one of the merchants, and since neither of them bothered to wipe off the rain-clouded windows for a glimpse of the Jordanian countryside, I could only sit and stare at the picture of Abdel Nasser that was stuck in the visor above the driver's part of the windshield. As we neared the outskirts of Jericho, however, the doctor began wiping off his window vigorously in order to point out to me the mud huts and rain-soaked tents of the refugee camps; the driver and the *mukhtar* joined him in explaining how these miserable folk had been driven from their land by the Jews, who were, in the words of the doctor, "like a thorn in the eye—every time the eye moves, the thorn pricks. Such a thorn has to be removed."

"By peace or war," the *mukhtar* added, "it makes no difference."

When we had passed the camps, the windows were allowed to cloud up again, the merchants slept on, the *mukhtar* and doctor settled back to smoke, and I was left with only the smile of Colonel Nasser.

All day, and the next day, Friday, I traveled through the countryside, sometimes in taxis, sometimes in buses, sometimes in private cars, but always in rain. On the third day the sun came out, and I decided to make my trip to Beht Safafa, the Arab village that was split in half. To visit either part of the village you need permission from the military government—of Israel or of Jordan, depending on which side of the barbed wire you happen to be standing at the time. A boy from the Israeli side, which I had visited previously, had given me the name of a man on the Jordanian side, and I had decided to go there and ask permission to talk with him. To be unmasked as a working reporter during my four days as a religious pilgrim would, of course, lead to trouble, but my plan was to look very wide-eyed and ask questions "merely as an interested tourist."

I asked an Arab Legionnaire at the Damascus Gate how to get permission to visit Beht Safafa, and he told me I would have to go to Bethlehem, which was only a mile or so from the village. A twenty-minute bus ride took me from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, where a second Legionnaire, wearing a "Tourist Police" armband, told me that as long as I was not carrying a camera, I could get permission to visit Beht Safafa by going there and telling the men at the Arab Legion post what I wanted. It sounded very simple.

BEHT SAFAFA lies in a valley below the main road from Jerusalem to Bethlehem. A muddy promise of a road-to-be leads down from the highway through rocky, untended fields to the stone houses of the village. The farther I went down the muddy path, the slower I walked, for I knew I was being watched by the soldiers of two different armies, both of whom were hidden from view. Lying somewhere out there among the scattered stone houses was a line of barbed wire that could not be crossed without risking the fire of one, or both, of the armies, and although I was still far from the center of the village, I began searching the ground, fearing that at any moment I would find that the last step I had taken had put me in another country. A woman with a jug of water on her head and a barefoot child at her side passed by and stared right through me. An ancient, white-bearded man with a white *kafia* flowing down from his head to his shoulders leaned out of a doorway. I kept on walking, wondering where the Arab Legion post was to be found when two Arab Legion men with black ammunition belts strapped on their chests, and rifles on their shoulders appeared on the top of a small ridge on the road

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just ahead and came striding toward me. I stopped, smiled, and said, "Hello, I'd like to get permission to visit here." The soldiers smiled back, exchanged glances with each other, and one motioned for me to follow. We walked back about ten yards to a plain stone house I had just passed. One of the soldiers beside me yelled *"Ingleesi,"* and I looked up to see three Arab Legionnaires staring down from a second-floor terrace.

"Come on up," one of the men on the terrace said, and I walked up the stairs to the Arab Legion Post headquarters, the two soldiers following behind. A young, pale private with immense round eyes was seated at a table inside the main room. He offered me a chair, while four other soldiers stood by, smiling and staring. I explained that I wanted to see Hassan Aly, the *mukhtar,* and have him show me the Arab side of the village. The soldiers all looked at one another, took turns shrugging, and finally the pale private said he would have to ring up the sergeant. While we waited, I was offered peanuts and cigarettes, and asked about life on "the Jewish side"; several more soldiers came in and the group pressed closer around me to get a better look.

"How you like the Arab Legion?" one said. "Good?"

I looked up at the five faces surrounding me, each topped with the green, silver-spired helmet that alternates with the *kafia* as the official headdress of the Arab Legion, and though I opened my mouth to reply, not a sound emerged, whereupon all of us burst out laughing at once. Cigarettes were offered from several directions, and one of the men started to ask about the girls in America, but before I could answer, the sergeant came in, and the party was over.

A short, dark man with a disproportionately large black mustache, the sergeant shook hands with me quickly and firmly, with the air of a busy surgeon who has come to meet the patient before the operation, and sat down behind the desk. He flipped through the pages of my passport and asked for my permit to visit Beht Safafa. I explained that a soldier in Bethlehem had told me I could get permission right there in the village. The sergeant repeated the question, and when I gave the same answer he said, "It is not enough," and proceeded to crank the handle of the phone on the wall beside him. The soldiers stopped smiling, moved back away from me, and the rest of the talk was carried on in Arabic. After his phone call the sergeant took paper and pen from his desk, copied down my passport statistics, and asked again who had sent me, whom I was to see, and why. Having duly noted all these in his report, he was plunged temporarily into confusion: what, precisely, was the nature of the military ordinance I had violated? There was evidently nothing on the books to cover the case of an American who had crossed from Israel and come to Beht Safafa to see Hassan Aly, *mukhtar,* on the recommendation of Said Elian, who lived on the Israeli side of the village and worked in the YMCA cafeteria in the new city section of Jerusalem. Some classification at last was settled on, a soldier was assigned to take me to the military governor at Bethlehem, and I left Beht Safafa wishing I had stuck to writing about only one half of the village.

Word of an American "infiltrator" at Beht Safafa had apparently preceded us to Bethlehem, for when my guard and I arrived there, we were greeted by about a dozen Arab Legionnaires, four taxi drivers, one priest, two souvenir postcard salesmen, and the mayor of Bethlehem, all waiting in front of the military government headquarters.

A LEGION officer greeted me and asked to see my passport. While he studied it, I began explaining that I was "merely an interested tourist," and that I had been told I could get permission to see Beht Safafa just by going there and asking. During this time, the mayor was peeking over the shoulder of the Legion officer in order to have a look at my passport. "Born in Indiana, eh?" he asked.

"Yes, sir!" I said. "Indianapolis. That's about 200 miles south of Chicago, in the Midwest, that is, the center part of the country, below the Great Lakes."

"Yes," said the mayor, "my son goes to school at West Lafayette."

"Purdue!" I said.

"So one of the tourist policemen told you to go straight to Beht Safafa for permission?" asked the mayor.

"Yes sir, he said if I didn't have a camera it was all right to go there and ask at the Arab Legion Post for permission."

"Well, it was probably a misunderstanding," he replied. "It's a serious thing, but if you won't go down there again—." The mayor smiled. "Since you're from Indiana we'll try to fix it up for you this time."

I was ready to break into a chorus of "Hail, Hail to Old Purdue" when an Arab Legion officer standing on the steps pointed at me with his swagger stick and said something in Arabic. Everything changed to Arabic again, the smiles disappeared, and I was ushered inside by my guard, the Legion troops trailing behind. The civilians, including the mayor, were left standing on the sidewalk.

The military governor of Bethlehem was a tall, glowering man in a brown business suit and heavy black overcoat. He sat hunched over a small desk that was stacked with papers and wreathed in smoke from an ashtray full of mashed cigarette butts that hadn't quite been put out. After reading the report of the "incident" written up by the sergeant at Beht Safafa, he turned to me. "Where do you come from?" he asked.

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"America," I said.

"No!" he shouted. "Where do you come from to Jordan?"

"Israel."

"No!" he shouted again, and I began to wonder if the Arabs had borrowed some brainwashing experts as well as technicians from their new Eastern friends. But it turned out to be only a question of semantics.

"You mean you come from *Occupied Territory*," the governor said.

"Yes, sir," I said.

"You know Beht Safafa is half in Occupied Territory?"

"Yes, sir."

The governor pounded the desk. "You think there is nothing between Jews and Arabs?" he shouted. "You think we are practically not in a war? What are you—you think you are going to make peace between Arabs and Jews, is that why you went to Beht Safafa?"

"Look, I'm not a crackpot," I said. But upon hearing the words I realized that in my present position they would be pretty hard to support. I settled back in my seat without pursuing the point and said, "I was just curious."

"The border is not a place for curiosity," the governor answered.

He drummed his fingers on the desk, stared at the opposite wall, and asked, "How long have you been in Occupied Territory?"

"A month, sir."

"A month!"

The governor took out a long sheet of paper, copied down some data from my passport and with pen poised and brow furrowed, said: "Now —you will tell me who sent you to Beht Safafa and why, and who you were to see, and what you were to say."

Slowly I went through my story again, how I had been given the name of the *mukhtar* by a boy on the "Occupied" side, how all I wanted was to see the village because of its unusual division. There were more questions, more answers, and after about ten minutes the paper was covered with the scrawls and chicken-track marks and dots of written Arabic. The governor pushed it in front of me. "Sign this!" he ordered.

"But I can't read it!" I said.

"You don't have to read it, you only have to sign it," the governor explained.

"Look, how do I know what's written here, it might be—"

"It's just what you told me!" the governor shouted. "If you told me the truth just now, you sign this."

I looked at the dark, rigid face of the governor, straining toward me, and picked up the pen. Until that moment I don't think I had ever been conscious of how my name is spelled, but now, as the letters slowly materialized on the paper, they were being carved into my mind as well. The fact that I had a middle name became a source of sudden joy, for it meant I still had some time before the signature came to an end. When it was finally done I felt sickeningly sure that I had just turned over my life and property, gold cross and all, to the Arab League, and would probably end my days wiping goggles for King Hussein.

The governor put the document, along with my passport, into an envelope, sealed it up, and handed both it and me into the custody of two Arab Legion men.

"You will have to report to Jerusalem," he said. "This is a serious matter."

"Yes, sir."

"Do you have a car?"

"No, sir."

The governor looked out the window. The sun had gone down, and that meant there were no more buses.

"You will take a taxi," he said. "These men will go with you. You will pay for the taxi."

"Yes, sir."

The crowd outside had disappeared by this time—including my fair-weather friend, the mayor —and one of the Legionnaires assigned to guard me hailed a taxi. Bethlehem was dark, there were no stars going by—silent or otherwise—and a last frantic glance before I got into the taxi left me with only one impression: the looming Church of the Nativity, sitting like some great factory in the center of the town, topped by a neon star and a neon cross, and on the opposite side of the street, the lighted window of the "Holy Manger Souvenirs, Ltd." shop.

As I sat in the taxi between two Arab Legionnaires on the trip through the dark, silent hills to Jerusalem, I had only one thought in mind: an overpowering wish to be standing in the middle of Times Square, with the news of the Middle East running around the *Times* building in hurrying, lighted letters that would disappear on 42nd Street.

MY INTERROGATOR in Jerusalem turned out to be a quiet officer who stood behind the pipe of a coal stove that sat in the middle of the room, and occasionally peeked around it to ask me a question. He looked at my passport for a long time and then asked me what sort of occupation a "researcher" was. Before leaving New York I had been making some extra money as a research assistant for a sociology professor at Columbia, and my passport was stamped accordingly. It was this designation, in fact, that had enabled me to cross over to Jordan without betraying my intentions as a reporter.

When I told the officer I did research work for a college professor, he brightened for a moment, as if he had stumbled on the answer to the whole confusing incident.

"Excavations, you mean, and that sort of thing?"

"No," I said, "sociology."

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The officer's face disappeared again behind the stovepipe; after a minute or so of silence he spoke up: "What church do you belong to?"

"Baptist," I replied hastily, clutching the gold cross in my pocket and wondering whether it might not be a good idea to let it drop to the floor in front of the officer.

"You've been in Occupied Territory a month," he said, looking over the report from Bethlehem.

"Yes, sir."

"I suppose you want to return there?"

"Yes, sir, I do."

The officer crossed the room, staring at the floor. When he reached the other side he told me he would "study the matter." I was to report back to him the following day at eight. He kept my passport, the Arabic document I had signed, and any shred of well-being that might still be remaining to me. I was free to go my way for the next twelve hours, but I would have preferred it had the officer come right out in the open and told me what was in store for me no matter how horrendous, instead of leaving the future to my imagination.

Returning to the Hotel Petra, I noticed an Arab Legion soldier sitting with the pilgrims around the coal stove. The manager, stationed at his desk, was chewing on a toothpick and eyeing me carefully. I went straight to my room, locked the door behind me, and pulled down the shade. The first thing that entered my mind was my notebook. I had several pages of notes on Jordan —conversations with a few people, and statistics about the country that I'd jotted down before I came. If the Arab Legion had any doubts left about my being a spy for Israel, the notebook would certainly eliminate them. I stuffed it into my pocket and hurried outside.

It was about nine o'clock in the evening, and the streets of the Old City were like a backdrop for the sewer scenes in *Phantom of the Opera*. The vaulted roofs were still dripping from the rains of the day before; every step I took gave a hollow echo. I passed a few lighted cafés on my way from the hotel, after which the streets were empty of everything but cats and shadows. But there was no place to hide the notes. The streets and the walls were all made of cement; if I simply dropped the notebook and walked away I was sure it would be found by some soldier and presented—soaked, dirty, but still readable—as Exhibit A in my prosecution. I walked on faster into the interior passageways, and stopped short in front of an open sewer. I stood still, took the notebook out of my pocket, and listened. There was only the dripping of rain on cement. I bent down toward the sewer, and two steps sounded up the street. About fifty yards ahead was the dark outline of an Arab Legionnaire. I stuffed the notebook back into my pocket and hurried back to the Petra.

The next half hour was spent in the bathroom. First I ripped the three pages of Jordan notes from the rest of the notebook and, holding them above the toilet, lit a match; it did not, however, succeed in setting the notes on fire, but burnt my hand instead. In the ensuing confusion, I dropped the vital pages into the toilet. I retrieved them only to find that they were soaking wet and would not burn. The next step, of course, was to flush them down the toilet. There was a certain risk involved—the Arab Legion might conceivably rip up the pipes to get the evidence against me—but by then I was desperate. The only difficulty was that the plumbing wouldn't work. I returned to my room with the notes in a large and soggy wad in my pocket, still quite decipherable—and doubly dangerous now because I had obviously tried to destroy them. To attempt to hide them in my room was the purest folly, for the prying manager, who already suspected me of Jewish sympathies, would undoubtedly come upon them and turn them over to the authorities. There was only one thing left to do.

I undressed, turned off the lights, and got into bed with the notes. Through the long cold Easter Eve I lay there shivering and imagining the various possible fates that awaited me in the morning, all the while slowly, methodically chewing away at the soggy paper. By morning, the notes were gone.

I ATE a hearty breakfast and while the pilgrims and the manager weren't looking, managed to slip outside and hurry off by myself. No one would know I was on my way that Easter morning not to the Sunrise Service of the Garden Tomb, but to the Jerusalem headquarters of the Arab Legion. On my way there I weighed the possible disasters once more, and made up my mind to break down and tell the whole story if I were taken into custody. It would mean all sorts of trouble with the consulates of Jordan, Israel, and the U.S., but I decided that of the two possibilities, it was better to be a conniving reporter than an international spy. My real hope, however, was to be dismissed as a crackpot and allowed through the gates the next morning with the rest of the returning pilgrims, my press credentials and machinations undiscovered.

The man who had questioned me the night before was busy with two disputing Arabs who were waving canes and cigarettes about when I entered the office. After ten minutes or so they left, and the officer, turning to me at last, excused himself, and went off to fetch my dossier. He came back in a while, holding my passport and several documents in Arabic, and settled down at his desk to study them. After a few minutes more of silence he pushed the passport across the desk. "You may go now," he said.

"Yes, sir."

I was almost out of the office when he called me back: "One moment!"

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"I presume you will spend the rest of your stay in Jerusalem," he said.

"Yes, sir, I certainly shall."

The outside world was beautiful and bright, in the way that it must be to all released prisoners. I walked for about ten minutes without knowing where I was going. Buses and taxis were leaving for Bethlehem, Nablus, and Jericho, Hebron and Amman, the Dead Sea and the Arabian border. I stood for a moment on the road, then, turning away from temptation, I bought a bag of bananas, and headed for the Mount of Olives.

The view took in all Jerusalem, spread across its hilltop site in a mass of pale yellow stone, bubbled with dome-shaped roofs and grown with towers and spires. The fortress-like wall of the Old City enclosed the buildings on the eastern edge that I was facing, and seemed, in fact, to enclose all Jerusalem, for it melted into the rest of the stone before you could see its western limits. No barbed wire or sandbags were visible, and there was no way to tell that Jerusalem was partly in "Occupied Territory." There was no way to tell, in fact, that it was populated, for the narrow streets of the Old City closed off the sight of its people. Nothing moved.

Neither did I, and only once more in the day was my peaceful existence endangered. A patrol of barefoot Arab children spotted me from the hillside, yelled *"Ingleesi! Ingleesi!"* and stampeded into my camp with outstretched hands. I promptly emptied my pockets and handed over all my Hashemite coins, plus several Israeli *prutot,* an American penny, and a small gold cross to the delighted leader, and the band charged away toward the road. There was only the sunlight and scenery again until noon, when the sound of the *muezzin* came from the minaret, calling the Moslems to prayer. It drifted alone above Jerusalem until a few moments later when the heavy interruption of the church bells came, breaking on the world in a brassy chaos that left nothing else, and then, as if satisfied, died away one by one leaving the unmoving city in silence.

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J. G. WEIGHTMAN

THE FRENCH LITERARY SCENE

THE FIFTH REPUBLIC, i.e. the personal rule of General de Gaulle, has now lasted seven years, and while it has entailed little in the way of overt, totalitarian repression, one cannot help feeling that a certain blankness has descended over French literature, as over the political and intellectual life of the country. In this instance, it is almost impossible to distinguish between cause and effect. Is the largely conformist atmosphere due to the fact that the nation has provisionally accepted Gaullist authoritarianism in the belief that it may come to an end at any moment, or was de Gaulle able to take over smoothly because the French, and their writers with them, were temporarily fatigued by the emotions of the Occupation, the Resistance, the Liberation, the Cold War, the Indo-Chinese and the Algerian conflicts, etc., and therefore ready to lie fallow or play games of patience for a time? Without minimizing the General's command of the situation, I would incline to the second alternative. The present fairly quiet state of affairs, noticeable both in pure literature and in the literature of social comment, may be a natural lull. In politics, since the end of the 18th century, France has oscillated between democratic experiments and relapses into authoritarianism; in literature, too—although there has not always been a direct correspondence between the political situation and the literary—effervescent creative periods have alternated with flatter periods of less exciting production. At the moment, French literature seems to have arrived at the end of a phase; it may be, of course, that the young men who will inaugurate the next phase are already busily composing their works in obscurity.

Perhaps our expectations are exceptionally high in the case of France because "French culture" is something we, like the French themselves, are used to talking about quite glibly, much more so, I fancy, than we do about "American culture" or "English culture." Perhaps we tend to assume rather too easily that, whatever the incidental achievements of other countries, "culture," both literary and artistic, is a national French product, or more specifically a Parisian product, like a more serious form of *haute couture*. All good culturalists go to Paris . . . ah! the cafés of Saint-Germain-des-Prés and Montparnasse . . . the excitement of creative conversation. . . . What was Jean-Paul Sartre's last pronouncement? . . . Will Françoise Sagan's new novel win the next Prix Goncourt?

In France, more than elsewhere, the critics are always on the lookout for new trends or for new personalities who are, as it were, advancing the cause of literature. Through long habit and national pride, the French expect their country to be in the literary vanguard, although at the same time they have always had a tendency to adopt certain foreign writers with enthusiasm—William Faulkner, Charles Morgan, and Bertolt Brecht, for instance—and even to imply that these writers are fully appreciated only in Paris. Since they look upon their capital as the cultural center of Europe and perhaps of the world, they are willing to assimilate any foreign body into it, without necessarily attaching much importance to the collective foreign background from which that body springs. I once heard Professor Denis Saurat, not a uniquely chauvinistic Frenchman, declare in a public lecture: "Each great French writer is worth a whole foreign literature. . . . Who had heard of Existentialism before Sartre gave it world currency?" There is some truth in the second statement. Contemporary French writing is riddled with references to Hegel, Heidegger, Dostoyevsky, Kafka, and Kierkegaard, yet these writers are not thought of as being, in the first place, German, Russian, Czech, or Danish, but rather as being Parisian intellectuals by posthumous adoption, in a manner somewhat analagous to that in which Ionesco and Beckett have become Parisian playwrights, or Picasso and Giacometti, Parisian artists, by choice during their lifetimes. In one sense, this open-mindedness is admirable; in another sense, it can be irritating, because it operates very selectively and according to the dictates of Parisian fashion; it is almost as subjective and non-historical as the use made of classical authors such as Sophocles and Euripides by the neo-classical French authors of the 17th century. Both the assimilation of chosen foreigners and the constant refurbishing of the avant-garde are part of that

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buzz of interest about literature and culture in general, which is still a special feature of Parisian life.

I SAY "STILL," because changes are taking place and may help to account for the end-of-phase feeling which is noticeable in literature, as well as in the theater, the cinema, and the fine arts.* Until well into the postwar period, Paris seemed small and compact compared to London or New York and it contained literary and artistic communities which continued the old French traditions of the *salons* and the cafés. Saint-Germain-des-Prés and Montparnasse were literary villages where you could see people studiously writing away in the *Deux Magots* or the *Dôme*. A young man would "come up to Paris" to try to make his entry into the existing literary society; he would even appeal for help to some eminent figure, as many young men did to Gide or as Jean Cau did to Sartre. In one of the early numbers of his review, *Les Temps Modernes,* Sartre maintained that no French writer could stay away from Paris for long and that one of the reasons why it was comparatively easy to get French intellectuals to sign manifestoes was that they all lived within walking distance of each other and could be reached in a day. Practically everyone knew everyone else well enough to be friendly or to quarrel in a stimulating manner. Even in the 50's, the early "New Wave" films had a homemade look, as if they had been produced—as was indeed the case—by a few friends working with a very limited budget, and the talk about *la caméra-stylo* (the movie camera as fountain-pen) seemed to emphasize the survival of the French artisan tradition of the individual creating the artistic object almost by folk means in a community of craftsmen: the novelist writing and rewriting his book in longhand; the painter or the sculptor, such as Giacometti, living in bohemian untidiness in his studio and spending his evenings in animated discussions with other artists and writers.

My impression is that this attractive pattern is now finally breaking up. The modernization of French life and the increased interest in the technological rather than the intellectual, the population explosion which has made Paris more crowded and expensive than ever before, the fact that all intellectuals now own cars and are far more mobile than they ever were in the past—all this means a less concentrated literary community. One or two of the important intellectual reviews have closed down because of rising costs and it is rumored that others will shortly follow suit; this is a serious blow to the high-powered intellectual discussion for which Paris has always been noted. There are no longer any *salons* to speak of, and anyone who visits the famous cafés in the hope of seeing congregations of intellectuals is likely to be disappointed. At the peak hours, the tables are full, but with people more interested in material prosperity than the things of the spirit. No statesman has relaunched the famous middle-class slogan of the 19th century: *Enrichissez-vous!* ("Enrich yourselves!"), yet the atmosphere tends to be dominated by a complacent materialism, which is developing under the aegis of de Gaulle's lofty pronouncements about national regeneration.

The decline of the literary population as a separate entity may not be entirely a bad thing, if writers find some way of both belonging more intimately to the community and continuing to write about it. French literature has always been rather inbred, and it is arguable that French intellectuals, through tending to live among themselves, have been regrettably isolated from the nation. On the other hand, the argument can be reversed; it was perhaps through inbreeding that French literature achieved that bitterness and extremism which can be seen as its essential qualities. If French intellectuals and writers have fewer opportunities than before of sharpening their wits on each other through direct contact, a valuable characteristic may be irretrievably lost.

THE POSSIBLE disruption of the intellectual milieu does not alter the fact that a great deal of what might be called para-cultural activity goes on in Paris—so much, indeed, that it is particularly difficult there to see the wood for the trees. No sooner is a new movement spotted than it is praised or attacked or just talked about until it seems almost to dissolve in a blur of words. Of course, since the advent of the mass media, this has been the case to some extent everywhere and in all branches of artistic endeavor. In the Anglo-American context, it is now most notable in connection with pop-singers, on whom the public hysteria of juvenile audiences confers charismatic value almost at random. A similar, though milder, hysteria can operate in literature, especially in France. The phenomenon has been admirably analyzed by the ex-Surrealist novelist and essayist, Julien Gracq, who has the distinction of being the only person ever to refuse the Prix Goncourt on grounds of artistic morality, and of having done so several years before Sartre turned down the Nobel Prize. In his brilliant pamphlet, *La Littérature à l'estomac* ("Literature Takes to Bluff") Gracq argues that, since about the middle of the 19th century, reputations have ceased to be based on the actual reading of books by the public and are now, to a large degree, a matter of publicity, hearsay, or extraneous accident. Perhaps the tendency goes further back in history than Gracq quite realizes. After all, the young ladies of the 18th century swooned at the sight of the elderly Voltaire, so famous was he, and it is by no means

* Music is beyond my scope, but it is perhaps significant that the liveliest younger composer, Pierre Boulez, now lives in voluntary exile in Baden-Baden and, in a recent article in *Réalités*, made some very scathing remarks on the present state of musical culture in France.

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certain that they had read his works very carefully. Some forty years later, other young ladies were swooning at the sight of the young Byron, and it is unlikely that the cause was pure critical appreciation. The phenomenon was probably the same as that which fills any public hall in Paris to bursting point when Sartre gives a lecture. It may be that all admiration tends to feed on itself and to turn into pseudo-religious hysteria. Even so, Gracq makes a valid point. French literary life is increasingly characterized by an agitated frothiness, and all the more so since literature is a subject of fashionable interest.

Other factors, too, accentuate this trend. Since World War II, especially, the state has concerned itself actively with writers and artists, at least those above a certain level of fame. Believing firmly in what is called *la diffusion de la culture française,* it has sent them on lecture tours or arranged exhibitions or rewarded them with national funerals. This is obviously a good thing up to a point. But state patronage may also operate clumsily and in terms of national prestige. In the earlier stage of his career, Sartre wrote a scintillating article, entitled "The Nationalization of Literature," in which he protested against the way the authorities tend to use any outstanding figure as a national asset, with little regard for the actual content of his work. At any given moment, there has to be an exciting avant-garde whose representatives are dispatched around the world—for instance, Alain Robbe-Grillet must, by now, have given essentially the same lecture on the "New Novel" in hundreds of different places, from Tokyo to Buenos Aires and from Edinburgh to Istanbul; I have heard it twice, once in London and once in Oxford—and a Grand Old Man, who represents French culture at its ripest. At the moment, this is François Mauriac who, as a staunch Gaullist, is well in the running for a national funeral. But if fate is unkind and makes Jean-Paul Sartre die before General de Gaulle relinquishes power, it might not be beyond the scope of that considerable ironist to bury the recalcitrant, left-wing intellectual with full official honors. He is reported to have murmured magnanimously on one occasion: *"Sartre, c'est aussi la France."* Mauriac, in his book on de Gaulle, tells how keen the General was at the time of the Liberation to have news of André Gide, because Gide was then the reigning Grand Old Man, although too proselytizing a homosexual to be fully assimilable by the official machine.

The most curious aspect of the "nationalization" of culture under the Gaullist regime has perhaps been the appointment of André Malraux, the world-famous, ex-Communist novelist and art historian, as the first Minister for Culture. The sincerity with which he carries out his functions cannot be doubted, but it is painful to see him on television opening exhibitions or delivering official speeches in the quavering, rhetorical tones of an old-fashioned politician—in other words, doing things that the average good administrator might do as well, instead of writing the books that he alone could write. Although literature comes under his jurisdiction, he appears to have had little or no influence on it. A year or so ago, he had a resounding battle with the state theater, the Comédie Française, about its predilection for vulgar, audience-catching, 19th-century farce and, as far as one can tell, produced no effect whatever on that ancient corporation. He has also tried to react against excessive centralization in the capital by establishing *"Maisons de la culture"* (this left-wing, 30's term sounds anachronistic in the modern context) in a number of provincial towns for the organization of lectures, concerts, theatrical performances, etc., but it is too early to say whether they are going to develop a dynamic life of their own. His most visible achievement so far has been the cleaning of the old buildings of Paris. He has organized many gala performances of *Carmen* at the Opera for visiting heads of state, and is reputed to have instructed General de Gaulle in the appreciation of modern painting. The slightly comic nature of all these activities illustrates the difficulty of encouraging "culture" from above as a specific entity or entities when, ideally, it should grow spontaneously from below.*

AFTER MAKING these general remarks about the French literary scene, I should perhaps go on to summarize the content of recent literature, as I see it, in order to justify my suggestion that we are now at the end of a phase. It should be understood that, in saying this, I am accepting the French distinction between the inventive part of literature and that which respects already established forms and themes, and am referring only to the former. At any given moment, a large body of writers is producing "traditional" novels or plays and it may sometimes be the case—although a typical Parisian intellectual will never admit this—that the "traditional" has a better chance of survival than the "avant-garde." To quote an instance dating back to the inter-war period, I should not be surprised if parts of Roger Martin

* For an astringent French comment on Malraux's use of foreign works of art, such as the Venus de Milo and the Mona Lisa, as instruments of French prestige, see J.-F. Revel's remarks in *La Fin de l'Opposition* ("The End of the Opposition"). Anyone wishing to be acquainted with the most pessimistic French view of the present state of the French cultural scene could not do better than read Revel's works—*Pourquoi des Philosophes?* ("Why Philosophers?"), *Le Style du Général* ("The General's Style"), *La Cabale des Dévots* ("The Conspiracy of the Believers"), and *La Fin de l'Opposition*. They are witty attacks on what Revel considers to be vagueness, emotional woolliness, conformism, and intellectual timidity. Revel is in the Voltairean tradition of hard-headed, rationalistic common sense, and it is a notable feature of the cultural scene in France at the present moment that this tradition should have so few representatives.

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du Gard's family chronicle, *Les Thibault* (*The Thibault Family*), which displays no technical or psychological innovations whatever, turned out to be more lasting than some, at least, of the avant-garde works of his friend, André Gide. What is avant-garde now may seem old-fashioned in fifty years' time, whereas what appears traditional now may prove to have some solid virtue that keeps it going. It is a commonplace that a whole movement may sink into oblivion and some isolated work unexpectedly survive, in spite of its lack of eye-catching features.

With this proviso, and disregarding the abundant traditional output, we can distinguish three or four creative waves in French literature since the end of the Second World War. First came the group of writers usually referred to as Existentialists and who emerged, full of vigor and determination, from the atmosphere of the Resistance movement. They expressed themselves with almost equal facility in the novel, the theater, and in theoretical writing. About 1950, while they were still going strong, the concept of the Absurd, with which they had made considerable play, was given particular expression in the theater in the works of Ionesco, Beckett, and a number of minor exponents of the inconsequential. This was a separate development, because neither Ionesco nor Beckett subscribed to the theoretical attitudes of the Existentialists. Neither, in fact, produced any elaborate critical framework to support his works; Ionesco has published a few critical essays and a diary, while Beckett has written about Proust and composed, in addition to his plays, a series of absurd, tragic-comic novels. Some five years later, in the mid-50's, the "New Novel" began to appear. It has connections both with Existentialism and with the Theater of the Absurd. Philosophically, it is clearly in the wake of Existentialism and its leading figure, Alain Robbe-Grillet, was one of the first people to write enthusiastically about Ionesco. At the same time, Beckett, insofar as he is a novelist, has been classed retrospectively with the "New Novel." Unlike the Theater of the Absurd, the "New Novel" has been accompanied by a considerable body of theorizing. It has obvious links with the "New Wave" in the cinema, which occurred in the late 50's and has now more or less spent itself.* In the last three or four years, critics have begun to talk about a "New New Novel," centered to some extent around the periodical *Tel Quel*, and whose principal exponents are Philippe Sollers and Jean-Marie Le Clézio. It can be rightly seen as a further development of the "New Novel," with some back reference to Existentialism.

Incidentally, it is perhaps worth noting that, during the whole of this period, poetry has been even less prominent in France than in England or America. Some pre-war poets have continued writing—René Char, Henri Michaux, and Louis Aragon. Francis Ponge has achieved a degree of success through his now fashionable obsession with objects, which has caused him to be discussed both by Sartre and the "New Novelists." One or two fresh names have appeared—Yves Bonnefoy and Philippe Jacottet—but none of this amounts to a poetic movement.

As one looks back over the last fifteen or twenty years, it is impossible, I think, not to get the impression of a decline in literary and intellectual force. Whatever reservations one may wish to make about the actual quality of the works of Sartre, Camus, and their associates, the post Liberation period was a time of great vitality, and the writing it produced is correspondingly major in tone. The fact that most of it is tragic does not contradict, but rather confirms, this judgment, because tragedy supposes at least the belief that what happens to human beings is important and that their decisions have a certain grandeur, even when the outcome is disastrous. The slackening of tension is already marked in the Theater of the Absurd, where human destiny is presented in wry fashion as a perpetually repetitive farce. It is still more obvious in the "New Novel," in which no issue is ever really allowed to crystallize into a moral problem or into a definable statement about life. The "New Novel" carries ingeniousness to the point of byzantinism; yet, unless I am mistaken, this does not raise it above the level of minor literature. The "New New Novel" goes even further in emphasizing the writer's inability to cope either with the inner or outer worlds, even in the very act of applying words to them. He is defeated, as it were, by his own use of language, which does not manage to relate him to the rest of creation. However authentic his plight, he, too, is talking helplessly to himself in a corner of the universe.

Sartre and Camus always claimed to be very different from each other; they were certainly poles apart in temperament, background, and training; they quarrelled spectacularly. Yet if we reduce them to their simplest impulses, they seem to belong to the same historical or cultural moment, because they start from the same point and try to do parallel things. They both have a clear vision of the Absurd, of man's contingency, of the human consciousness as a flickering light which illuminates phenomena from its own, necessarily limited, yet inevitable, point of view. Neither is a determinist and, given the period at which they occur, they may, in this respect, be rather old-fashioned and anti-scientific. Both believe in human autonomy and again, perhaps, in a rather naïve way; the romantically extravagant assertions of will on the part of the hero of Camus's early

* Existentialism, the "New Novel," and the cinema were discussed in "The New Wave in French Culture," COMMENTARY, September 1960. I have not modified the opinions expressed in that article, but I have tried to avoid repeating points already made there.

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play, *Caligula,* are very similar to the excesses committed by Goetz, the hero of Sartre's *Le Diable et le Bon Dieu* (*The Devil and The Good Lord*). The Roman emperor imagined by Camus and the Renaissance bastard adventurer thought up by Sartre are almost identical mythical projections of Absurd Man. In Sartre's vocabulary, Absurd Man enjoys "freedom" and it is his moral duty to exercise that freedom. Camus prefers the term "revolt." Absurd Man is *l'homme révolté,* the rebel, i.e. he can protest both against his social situation and his metaphysical predicament. In either case, the result is much the same. Sartre and Camus are activated by what might be called the Promethean Complex, and their major works express the struggle to evolve a morality, a code of conduct, or a dignified attitude in face of the inhuman nature of the universe and the absence/presence of God. The struggle fails, of course—Camus passes from noble courage in *La Peste* (*The Plague*) to a sense of individual guilt in *La Chute* (*The Fall*), while Sartre has written a series of tragic novels and dramas and, in his latest theoretical volume, *La Critique de la raison dialectique,* has evolved the concept of the *practico-inert,* which almost negates his belief in freedom. Still, they both vibrate intensely with the effort of moving from the perception of the Absurd to some total grasp of the possibilities of human action.

The sense of struggle disappears in Ionesco and Beckett, to be replaced by a more elaborate and more anguished presentation of the Absurd. The circular, obsessive patterns of *La Cantatrice Chauve* (*The Bald Soprano*), *La Leçon* (*The Lesson*), and *En attendant Godot* (*Waiting For Godot*) express the Absurd—whether it be the Absurd of man's place in the universe or the more homely Absurd of his incomprehensible instinctual drives—in terms of dread or humor. By their very different, but most effective use of theatrical techniques, Ionesco and Beckett achieve in these early plays a direct and original rendering of the Absurd, such as is not to be found even in *L'Étranger* (*The Stranger*) or *La Nausée* (*Nausea*). Curiously enough, in their more recent works—*Rhinocéros, Le Piéton de l'air* ("The Air-Borne Pedestrian"), *Le Roi se meurt* (*The Death of The King*), and *Oh les Beaux Jours* (*Happy Days*)—both of them move back from the Theater of the Absurd to a form of Symbolist Theater, very reminiscent, I should say, of Maeterlinck's *Blue Bird* or Barrie's *Peter Pan,* although naturally cast in a more somber mold. These plays still contain excellent passages, but they appear to indicate an appreciable softening in the face of the Absurd, which is not offset by any fresh aesthetic or intellectual development.

At first sight, and especially if one judges it on the basis of the theoretical writings of its principal exponents, Robbe-Grillet, Nathalie Sarraute, and Michel Butor, the *nouveau roman* may appear as a very vigorous new departure. It is a highly conscious form of avant-garde literature, a concerted attempt made by a group of writers to adapt the novel to what they consider to be their contemporary vision of the world. They have spent a good deal of their time explaining that the "traditional" novel (some of them call it the "Balzacian" novel) is inadequate to express their vision, and that the genre must be revolutionized as other branches of art have been. One of Robbe-Grillet's first statements was that the novel must bring itself up to date as music and painting have done. Painting no longer tells a story, just as music is no longer concerned with recognizable tunes. He might have added, although I don't think he has ever done so, that since Mallarmé and Rimbaud, really up-to-date poetry, as opposed to the survivals of traditional modes, has abandoned discursive, rationalistic meaning to concentrate on what is considered to be specifically poetic. Claude Simon, a fringe member of the "New Novel" group, has provided a new angle by maintaining in a recent lecture that just as photography relieved painting of the function of recording reality and allowed it to concentrate on painterly values, so the development of the social sciences has freed the novel from the obligation of describing society in any rationalistic or discursive way. The novel can therefore reduce itself to its purest elements, which lie behind story-telling, character-drawing, fact-recording, message-delivering, and so on. This fits in with the rejection, both in theory and in practice, of character, plot, or any easily definable meaning, by Robbe-Grillet, Nathalie Sarraute, and, to a lesser extent, Michel Butor.

IF WE NOW ASK what the content of this "pure" novel is, we get the answer that it is "reality," because the "New Novelists" all claim to be realists. The issue has been confused, as always, by the ambiguities of the term "realism," which has meant various things since the middle of the 19th century, and by the fact that Robbe-Grillet, in particular, at first put forward a very simple view of the possibilities of objective realism, which he has now quietly abandoned. However, the word "realism" can be accepted, if it is taken to mean attempted fidelity to those states of consciousness which the writers consider to be most genuine at the present moment. Robbe-Grillet's reduction of consciousness to *le regard,* the gaze, whether it be actual, remembered, or imaginative, Nathalie Sarraute's concentration on fleeting initial impulses or "tropisms," and Butor's elaborate structures which, in the last resort, are self-canceling or self-defeating, are all intended to be true to the modern consciousness. Now, although Robbe-Grillet, for reasons that I find unconvincing, has specifically rejected the term "the Absurd" and Sarraute and Butor do not use it, I think that these writers, wittingly or unwittingly, are still

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trying to convey the perception of the Absurd. Their break with Sartre and Camus is possibly due to the fact that these two activists were in too great a hurry to move on from the Absurd to what are, in effect, modified forms of traditional humanism. Sartre's doctrine of commitment and his attempts to reconcile Existentialism and Marxism, Camus's belief in social solidarity and what might be called collective stoicism, obviously strike the "New Novelists" as being too gross, too vulgar, too "other-directed." They try to maintain the Absurd; they want to render a certain vision of reality before it has been made banal by description according to traditional categories. They are all, so far as I know, non-religious, yet this ambition is perhaps very close to a kind of mysticism; it sounds like some sort of attempt to commune with pure being, with the essence of experience.

An important point is that the "New Novelists" are not moralizing realists, except on the aesthetic level. They proclaim with indignation that artistic forms ought to evolve to keep pace with the changing human psyche, and that anyone perpetuating traditional forms is poisoning the public mind. However, on the level of ordinary life as it is described in the context of their books, they never use value terms at all; "good" and "evil," especially, are totally banned, perhaps because Sartre and Camus have been so lavish with them. For the "New Novelists," the individual consciousness in its purest or truest states, has not yet conventionalized itself to the point of accepting moral values, i.e. social values from without.

Of course, since they have to deal with something, most of the "New Novels" are concerned with situations that the reader can describe to himself in moral terms if he so wishes. Robbe-Grillet has a predilection for murders, sadism, and death; Sarraute is concerned with social maneuvering and hypocrisy; Butor has dealth with adultery. But in every instance, it is not the moral question that interests the writer; nor the story, because if it were told in the traditional way it would acquire moral overtones; nor the characters, because to be rounded off they would have to have moral attitudes. The moral question is disregarded, the story can only be followed by inference, the characters never take shape, because the real subject is the modern consciousness in isolation. In its purest state, it is thought of as being anonymous, uncertain of its own identity, probably amoral, very much aware of existing in time, and never sure of the relationship between what it is at one moment and what it is at another. Hence the tendency of the "New Novelists" to write mainly in the present tense, the only "true" tense, since the acceptance of the past and future tenses would suppose too firm an organization of experience. Hence also the habit of leaving characters unnamed or referring to them only by initials. If I have understood the books and their authors' comments on them, the implication always is that the state of unknowing or numbness which precedes all interpretations is the most genuine one. The writers display great ingeniousness in constructing their works without destroying this sense of numbness; as is well known, a device they frequently use is the obsessive description of objects and, with Robbe-Grillet, these objects may be perceived as in a dream.

I SYMPATHIZE with this philosophical or pseudo-philosophical critique of mental reality, which is already adumbrated in Sartre's *La Nausée*, Camus's *L'Étranger*, and in much of Paul Valéry's writing. It is carried still further in Philippe Sollers's *Drame* ("Drama"), which is a novel about a novelist failing to write a novel and in Le Clézio's *Le Procès-Verbal* (*The Interrogation*) and *La Fièvre* ("Fever"), where the sense of the Absurd is experienced as a pathological sensation, as it is by Sartre's hero, Roquentin. The fact remains that the works of the "New Novelists" strike me as tedious and unrewarding, and all the more so since the essential point was already made, most effectively, in *La Nausée* and *L'Étranger* and then again in the Theater of the Absurd. My negative response may be just a personal failure of sensitivity; on the other hand, I get the impression that even the sophisticated part of the French literary public has not really taken to the "New Novel" as it took to the interwar avant-garde—Gide, Proust, and Valéry—or to Sartre and Camus. The explanation I would suggest is that, whatever may happen in painting and sculpture,* the novel cannot be purified to the extent of dealing only with initial states on this side of rational judgment, because in real life we constantly have to go beyond the Absurd and *assume* that we can bestow collective significance. The crucial test is in the quality of the assuming, although that quality may ultimately elude rational description and be only sensed. Language is by definition articulate and communal, and the novel is inevitably impure since it deals with human relations. I cannot see the "New Novelists" as being anything but minor, and I guess them to be a conclusion rather than a beginning, because they seem to be playing solipsistic games with the form of the novel. However, it may well be that "historical necessity" requires those games to be played out to the end before the next development can take place.

* As regards music, I notice a resemblance between some of Robbe-Grillet's statements and those of Boulez and other post-Schoenbergian or post-Webernian composers. But they may be true for music without being true for language; music exists in itself, whereas language is in a necessarily unstable, dynamic relationship with its meaning.

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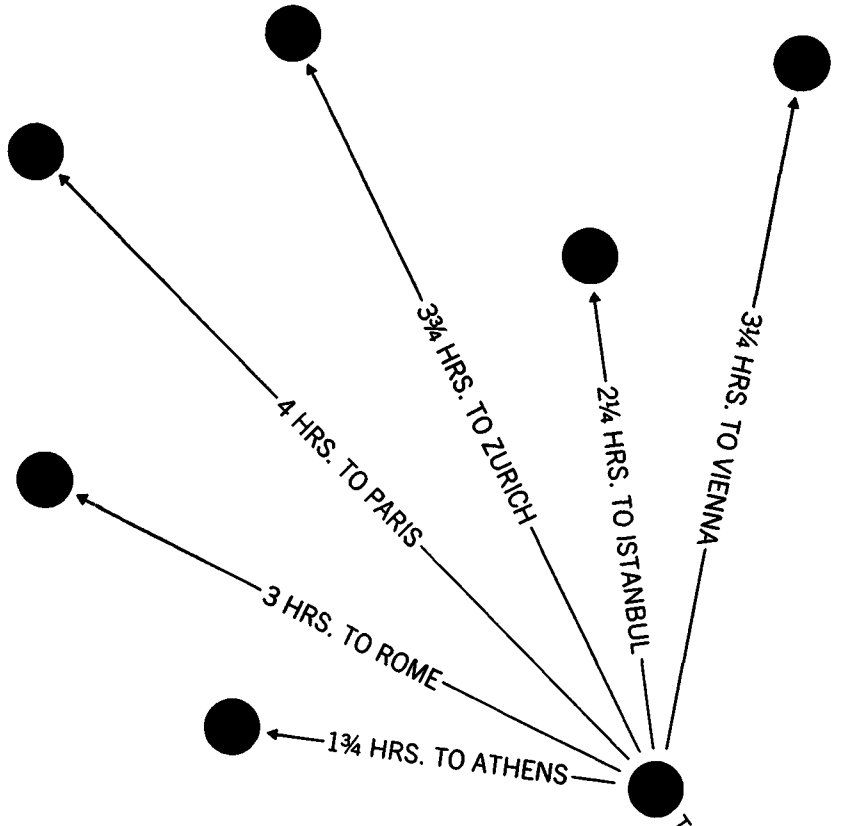

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Britain Under Socialism

OSCAR GASS

I will not cease from Mental Fight,
Nor shall my Sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem,
In England's green and pleasant Land.
—William Blake, "Milton," 1804.

SINCE OCTOBER 1964, Britain has been ruled by a Labour government—in high doctrine socialist. But, during these fifteen months, this socialism has proven more conservative, in relation to the established fabric of British society, than the government of Lyndon Johnson in relation to the different American inheritance.

Neither social reform nor economic expansion has been this Labour government's first priority. On the contrary, its distinctive claim is that—having inherited from a vote-seeking and irresponsible Conservative government an economy over-heated and over-extended—Labour introduced sobriety and economy. Labour, Mr. Harold Wilson said, put aside all purposes of mere class and transient popularity and did "what was best for Britain," indeed "what was best for sterling"! Lyndon Johnson exercised more elbow room.

As socialism brought little change, even non-Labour opinion did not find it impossible, in some contexts, to take this Labour government at its own reassuring national estimate. On November 26, 1965 (before the Rhodesian crisis boiled over), the London *Times* index of industrial shares stood 61% above July 1959 and within 4% of its all-time high: this is not the mirror of a market which fears for the values of property. On Rhodesian secession, the Labour government spoke for Britain—without need for a formal division in the House of Commons. Perhaps even more indicative, the Labour program for legislation in the new Parliament, presented in the Queen's Speech of November 9, 1965, was subjected only to tepid and ritualistic opposition.

IN A HOUSE of Commons of 630 members, Harold Wilson became Prime Minister with only 317 Labour seats. Subsequently his majority has been as low as one. This Labour government could therefore, theoretically, slip on a banana peel—lose three by-elections—and come crashing down. But, on reflection, such an end seems extremely unlikely: it would probably require the collaboration of the Liberal party in its own suicide. The Conservative party, in hands of moderate skill, retained power for 13 years, though it first came to office having received, in October 1951, some 231,000 fewer popular votes than Labour. My own hunch is that, with reasonable luck, Labour also may retain power for many years.

But the foundations of long life for Labour government need to be stipulated with some care. Labour did not achieve power in October 1964 because of any growth in British enthusiasm for socialism or for any other positive quality represented by the Labour party. Labour won simply because the British electorate was fed up with the Conservatives. About 23% of qualified voters were so indifferent that they stayed home. In relation to the preceding general election (1959), the Conservatives lost over 1¾ million votes and lost 62 seats, while the Liberals gained nearly 1½ million votes and gained only 3 seats: this switch brought Labour into power. Labour's own vote was actually *smaller* in the 1964 election, which it won, than in the elections of 1951 and 1955 and 1959, which it lost—13,949,000 Labour votes in 1951, then 12,405,000 in 1955, and 12,216,000 in 1959, but only 12,206,000 in 1964.

Labour is the preferred party of the British poor. British sociologists commonly classify two-thirds of their electorate as working-class.* In an election of great Labour success, something approaching 65% of those working-class people who go to the polls may vote Labour. But even a 65% working-class vote would not greatly distinguish the electoral position of Labour from that of the Democratic party in the United States. What is crucially distinctive is Labour's small middle-class support. It is unlikely that Labour today receives much more than 15% of the vote of the third of the population identified as middle-class. (In contrast, the Democratic party approaches a national middle-class majority.) It is this scarcity of the middle class in the Labour rank-and-file—though not in Labour leadership—that marks the social divide. It also reflects the failure of Labour ideology to penetrate. In 1960, Mr. Mark Abrams, perhaps the foremost student of these matters, noted

* There is a little essay of extraordinary value by Mark Abrams in *Must Labour Lose?*, London, Penguin, 1960. Parallel material, in part fuller and later, is presented in *Politics in England*, by Richard Rose, Little Brown & Co., 1964.

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". . . the almost complete failure of the Labour party to attract the interest and sympathy of young middle-class people," and he reported that ". . . only 10% of middle-class young people support the Labour party." It is in this context that we must appraise the fact that Labour has never received a popular majority of the votes cast in a general election. Ironically, Labour came nearest in 1951, with 48.8%, when it was swept out of office!

During the whole of 1951-64, there was no rise in the tide of Labour sympathies and affiliations. Abrams found that, in the 1950's, ". . . the already slight middle-class vote for Labour fell still further . . . and . . . the considerable minority of manual workers not voting Labour expanded a little more." The same trend apparently continued in the election of 1964. Labour also failed to broaden its hold in the southern and southeastern regions, where population is growing more rapidly than elsewhere. If Labour government is to have a long life, Labour must gain support in sectors of the British population which it failed to attract during 1951-64.

THE LONGEVITY of Labour government is probably not menaced by the Liberal party. From October 1951 to October 1964, the Liberal vote *did* rise from 731,000 to 3,099,000. Many voters who found Conservatism unattractive still could not bring themselves to vote Labour; many who rejected Labour could not take the final step into the Conservative camp. Some stayed home, some voted Liberal—though 3.1 million Liberal votes elected only 9 members of Parliament in 1964, while 12.2 million Labour votes elected 317. Now, however, when Labour is in office by so narrow a margin, and not looking very frightening, the fundamental question is reopened: Labour or Conservative? And the Liberal poll is consequently falling. Where the Liberal candidate was third at the general election of 1964, the Liberal percentage of the vote fell in 7 out of 8 by-elections during 1965.

A full cycle of Liberal disintegration was run only 15 years ago, under circumstances not dissimilar from the present. In February 1950, the Liberals polled 2,622,000. But then, in 20 months, as the basic contest—Labour or Conservative?—became sharper, the Liberals lost nearly three-quarters of their supporters. In October 1951, the Liberal poll fell by 1,891,000 votes, while the Conservatives gained 1,215,000 and Labour gained 682,000. Not improbably, if the issue between Labour and Conservatism again becomes sharp, the Liberal voters will again choose one of the major parties. For, in truth, only the tradition-bound can believe that Liberalism is today a genuine third alternative. The personally attractive Liberal leader, Mr. Jo Grimond, trumpets his "radicalism" over and over again, but he is not radical about anything in particular. "Should a Lib-Lab alliance come about," he said in September 1965, "the Liberals would have to supply the head and heart of this enormous, amorphous body we're being asked to drag out of the slough of despond." In truth, nobody was asking him.

Nor should the Conservative comeback of 1951 be taken to afford assurance of a Conservative return to power at a date fixed by some fancied normal "swing of the pendulum." The Labour defeat of 1951—in an uncompelled election—has instilled caution; Mr. Harold Wilson will choose his election time with great care. More important, the Labour government of 1945-51 had to impose great austerities, to repair war losses; Mr. Wilson has not gone that way, and he will not. The affirmative domestic program of the Labour government now centers on modest proposals of improving housing, enlarging educational opportunities, reducing the taxes ("rates") of the very poor, and raising benefits under social insurance. Regarding these positive things, it will be the role of a Conservative opposition to say either "me too" or "better a little less." Neither saying will add to Conservative popularity.

Negatively, on recent precedent, the Conservatives will be speaking frequently of the burden of taxation on corporations and on receivers of capital gains; they will be issuing warnings, over and over again, of the dangers of neglecting "incentive"—particularly the profit incentive of businessmen. These negatives and warnings are likely to win the Conservative party only the further devotion of the propertied classes who are Conservatives anyway. Even Mr. Iain Macleod, one of Conservatism's most attractive figures, was so foolish, in September 1965, to appraise Labour's new national plan, before a television audience, in a manner which caused an American lady to remark, "Richard Nixon with a British accent." A band of Richard Nixons is not going to win a British general election in the 1960's.

II

THIRTY YEARS AGO, I lived for a short time in south Wales, in the home of an unemployed coal miner. I shall not forget the response of a Welsh nine-year-old when I tried then to engage him in pleasantries concerning the attractions of Abertillery, his native town. "Dir-ty town; no work," he said, and would have no more. Such bitterness has abated.

In 1932, Neville Chamberlain, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, wrote of the need to create ". . . some interests in life for the large numbers of men who are never likely to get work." Among public officials in Welsh mining towns, during 1935-36, I found no outlook other than Chamberlain's. The one working-class student I knew in my Oxford college came—on a scholarship—from a town, in the north of England, where there had been no other employed person living on his

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street. I have never brushed against the memories of even a middle-class person of Labour affiliation, who was in his teens or older in the 1930's, without touching unexhausted fires of social bitterness and rejection.

And yet it will not do to identify these sentiments with an alert politics of class-conflict or even with a more amorphous cleavage of society into "We and They." I do not believe that, among the politically alert, the "We and They" cleavage was more distinct in the Britain of the 1930's than it is today.* And, as for the masses, their rejection of the old order—insofar as it has ever been expressed—came after World War II, not before. In the general election of 1931, the Conservative party received 11,979,000 votes; this was 55.2%—the highest share received by any single British party in this century. (Conservatives plus their "National" affiliates received 67%.) In 1935, the Conservatives received 53.7%—the second highest single party share of the century. In mass politics, the Britain of the 1930's stood—containing all stresses—on the old ways.

The greatest political demonstration of "We and They" in modern British history was the election of 1945. The British electorate then rejected Winston Churchill, together with his Conservative associates: such people were not trusted to reconstruct British society during peace. Conservatism was identified with the miserable prewar performance of the British economy. In the 1920's and 1930's, unemployment had rarely fallen below 10%. In four decades, through 1939, per capita income rose barely a half per cent a year. And neither Churchill nor his associates conveyed confidence that they would do much better in the future. The British electorate accordingly turned its back on the whole Conservative heritage. In 1945, the Conservative poll fell below 40%. Labour won 393 seats in Parliament and the Conservatives a mere 213. Only later, in the 1950's, when Conservatism also became associated with full employment and prosperity and broadening welfare provision, did difficulty arise in grasping the basis for the decisive rejection of Churchill-led Conservatism in 1945.

Neither the long Conservative rule of 1951-64 nor Labour's present tenure of office seems to have weakened the "We and They" cleavage—among the politically alert. In the City of London, in 1965, I found it in undisturbed convictions: that men of means, family, and traditional education are the true patriots; that their desires are the interests of the nation; and that they must soon again govern—or all is lost. On the Labour side, there is an alternative pattern of sympathies and affiliations, more open to new entrants—and that is its strength—but equally preclusive. When, in September 1965, a young Oxford economist said, in my presence, to a middle-aged Labour councillor, that the Master of an Oxford college was "one of us," they needed no further explanation. No such language would convey equivalent meaning in the United States.

NEVERTHELESS, British political individuality is coarsely blurred when it is made a story of displacement of middle-class rule by working-class rule. Historians like J. H. Hexter and Peter Laslett have rightly warned against pre-dating and over-weighting "the rise of the middle classes" in Britain. Laslett emphasizes the late continuance of aristocratic rule:

> . . . the so-called middle classes never in fact displaced the [aristocratic] ruling segment. . . . [Moreover] the ruling [aristocratic] segment exercised a [governmental] function as much as it occupied a position. And it went on exercising this function . . . until the beginning of class politics in 1900. The middle class never rose, at least it never rose to the top: and it never ruled.†

A middle class distinguishable from the traditional aristocracy makes only a minor and episodic appearance in the higher reaches of British government before 1868. And hardly has this middle class finally emerged, to participate in ruling Britain, when the benches of Parliament are coming to know also trade-union representatives of the working class. In the later development of the Labour party, its political leadership (as reflected in members of Parliaments and members of cabinets) becomes almost equally recruited from working-class and middle-class backgrounds. And surely middle-class recruitment will grow if Labour continues to govern Britain.

One of the most amiable aspects of this Britain, which now calls itself socialist, is that its men who rule are quite without domineering personal authority. The personal authority of elected rulers is, I believe, much greater in capitalist America than in socialist Britain. Any American president can exert greater moral suasion over a great monopolistic industry than can a British prime minister. And trade-union leaders, too—in automobiles, in railroads, in steel, in dock work, indeed in almost anything—will take much more seriously a call to the White House than to No. 10 Downing Street. (In fact, a British prime minister will hardly dare risk his dignity by making such a call.) That workers and prime minister are both Labour makes little difference. British workers do not accept the guidance even of their own elected trade-union officials: between 90 and 95% of all working-time lost in British strikes is chargeable

* A rather different perspective is communicated by Samuel H. Beer, *British Politics in the Collectivist Age*, Knopf, 1965. I find Beer's book illuminating, in major part. But I do not entirely share his judgments of the 1930's, of the present, and of some other questions.

† Quotation from J. H. Hexter, *Reappraisals in History*, Harper, 1963, p. xii. Mr. Laslett has now written his own book on these themes, entitled, *The World We Have Lost*, London, Methuen, 1965. Its perspective is so provocative as to stir sharp disappointment that, as a work of history, it is so slight.

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to "unofficial" stoppages which the trade-union organization has not approved. And both strikes and go-slow tactics are quite as common in nationalized industries as in others. Britons are not easily ruled: it is their distinction.

THE LABOUR LEADERSHIP—working-class and middle-class—stands apart from the British people in preferring to carry through one more nationalization—steel. And, so far as I can ascertain, this preference separates also the inner group of Labour militants from the outer group of Labour sympathizers. In 1960, the serious Labour monthly, *Socialist Commentary,* polled the public and found that even Labour supporters opposed public ownership of any more industries by nearly three to one, while the entire poll opposed extension by almost seven to one. No evidence suggests a change between 1960 and 1965.

In two decades, the higher hopes for British nationalization have turned to gray disappointment. *First*: "alienation" from work has not diminished. The ordinary worker did not find a new joy in labor under nationalization. And gifted and trained young people do not distinctively seek careers in nationalized industries. *Second*: nationalization has been a commercial failure. Nearly three billion dollars of debts have had to be written off for the railroads, coal mines, and BOAC. And both coal and railroads are still protected, deficit industries. *Third*: nationalization gave the rich opportunity to become richer. The industries nationalized were dominantly losers or earners of modest profit. Their owners were paid some three billion pounds sterling. This capital, when invested in growth industries, easily doubled in value during the subsequent decade—and remained free of any capital gains tax! *Fourth*: the nationalized "commanding heights" proved irrelevant to command. It was not decisively commanding to sell coal or railroad service at a loss, or even gas and electricity at a moderate profit. And the nationalized industries have not proven an apt instrument of economic stabilization, or of any other general policy.

It is not by espousing this last nationalization that Labour government will achieve long life. However, longevity may depend, in considerable measure, on Labour's skill in blending the socialist theme of "fellowship" with the competitive theme of "incentive." *Incentive* looks to the market—to individuals desiring enlarged incomes and exerting effort, skill, and ingenuity. *Fellowship* looks to mutual aid—to social responsibility for means of subsistence, education, and health. All British parties value both. But they do not blend both identically. A classic liberal asks society to assure the indispensable minimum; for the rest, he looks to the market. A classic socialist asks society to assure all material means; he sees no need for any market in human services.

Obviously, Labour does not hold the full socialist position. And, in this first fifteen months of office, Labour has taken only a few small steps along the equalitarian socialist path. Medical prescriptions were made free, at an additional annual cost to the Treasury equivalent to about $65,000,000. Local taxes on house property are to be rebated to about two million people with low incomes, in an amount equivalent to about $81,000,000 annually. Social insurance and assistance payments were increased, in March 1965, to give a married couple with two children between $3.64 and $4.48 more, per week. Housing—particularly housing for the working class—has been proclaimed the central benefit. But dwellings completed in 1965 will barely equal 1964. Only in 1970 does Labour plan to build 500,000 houses—about 28% more than in 1964; then, in relation to population, Britain would still be building less than West Germany, Sweden, and Switzerland in 1964.

Both Labour leaders and followers wish to retain the producer's incentive to "get ahead" by earning more. Also, in retirement pensions and unemployment compensation, Labour has moved toward graduation with individual earnings—that is, in the direction which gives life-long weight to income differences determined in the market.* But in health services and education Labour goes the socialist way: it follows the light of Aneurin Bevan, its prophet of the Left. And, in these matters, the way of the Left is also, I believe, in contemporary Britain, the way toward electoral success.

III

DURING THIRTEEN years of Conservative rule, the British economy grew almost as rapidly as ever in its history. Employment was full, except for short intervals. But real incomes grew more slowly than in any other industrialized country except the United States. The British people demanded more. And as these demands exceeded the output of the economy, they were honored in the only way possible—in the illusory incomes of inflation.

In 1964, the Gross National Product of the United Kingdom was equivalent to about $92 billion (U.S. then $629 billion). As some 25,432,000 persons were employed, this product came to about $3,600 per worker (U.S. then $8,600). Since 1951, British product per person employed has risen about 2.1% per year. The only long period in which the British economy may have grown faster is the three decades from the 1860's through the 1890's; then growth was perhaps at 2.2%. More-

* A remarkably subtle exploration of equality and inequality in British social thought and practice is made by T. H. Marshall in his little book, *Social Policy,* London, Hutchinson, 1965. Full, well-assembled, and comparative data are provided by M. F. W. Hennings "Social Security in Britain," in the *Economic Review* of the National Institute, London, August 1965.

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over, American real income per person employed grew, during 1951-64, by a percentage almost identical with the British. Yet, in America, only a minority were acutely dissatisfied. The British temper of today is more demanding of improvement than the American. Perhaps with reason. British factory workers put in six hours longer a week than American, and earn only half as much.

In an understandable tension, the resentment of British people at this relative economic lag is frequently accompanied by refusal to acknowledge fully how far their country has fallen behind. Any serious person can easily find out that West Germany, France, Italy, and many other countries have been advancing about twice as fast as the United Kingdom. But British non-professional opinion is commonly reluctant to recognize just where that places Britain now. So we find even the able economic commentator of *The Spectator,* Mr. Nicholas Davenport, explaining learnedly in 1964 that Britain had "sunk to third place,"* after the U.S. and Sweden. In fact, Britain is today in eleventh place. Her income per capita is lower than that of the U.S., Canada, Sweden, Switzerland, France, West Germany, Australia, New Zealand, Denmark, or Norway.

WHILE REAL output has advanced about 2.1% per worker per year, British families and individuals have received about three times as great annual increases in money incomes. During 1951-64, earnings from employment grew at an annual rate of 6.6% and property incomes at a rate of 5.3%. With a half per cent annual increase in employment, the money total of Britain's national product rose by about 6½% per year. Declining import prices made a great contribution to stabilizing the British price level. Nevertheless, the cost of living rose steeply, though irregularly—by 47% in 1951-65 (U.S. 21%). This sustained rise has kept everybody at high tension. If any British group does not receive annually at least 5% more income, it feels itself distinctly cheated.

The two great industrialized economies of relatively slow productivity advance—the United States and United Kingdom—have been managed on opposite principles. American policy has been directed to disciplining the labor force and stabilizing prices; it long accepted high unemployment, restraint on public spending, over-taxation, and tight money; in 1951-64, unemployment averaged 5¼%. The British economy, on the other hand, has usually operated with about 1½% unemployment and more unfilled jobs than people unemployed. Our most helpful guide to British economic policy in 1945-60 reports that "Conservative governments, no less clearly than Labour governments . . . put full employment first as the main object of policy."† Neither British political party was prepared to restrict demand, to a degree which risked unemployment, except temporarily during international financial crises. Both called upon the public repeatedly to exercise voluntary restraint against pushing up wages and prices. And with both, up to now, these calls have remained largely unheeded. (In 1965 also, money earnings per person employed rose between 7 and 8% in Britain—and about half as much in the United States.) Full employment can be strong brew.

WHEN THE Conservative government fell, it left behind an economy in chronic international difficulty. Britain's export competitiveness was low and its import propensity high. It had huge investments abroad—in the range of $28 billion worth. (Income from these investments now approaches 10% per year.) But Britain was short of ready cash: buying abroad annually some $22 billion of goods and services, her international reserve—gold and convertible currency—was only about $2¾ billion.

As British goods have been high-priced and their design rarely foremost, they could not hold export markets: Britain's share of world trade in manufactures fell from 21.9% in 1951 to 17.7% in 1958 and 13.7% in 1964. Moreover, though Britain has all along been a relatively high-tariff country, imports gained ground in her markets: in 1958-64, while her exports rose at about the same rate as domestic output, imports tended to rise about 1½ times as fast as domestic production. Every British wave of expansion therefore quickly precipitated a crisis in the meager foreign currency reserves.

In 1960, the official Radcliffe Committee recommended that the United Kingdom so conduct its affairs as to dispose annually of an international current-account surplus equivalent to $1¼ billion. But Britain earned no surplus at all, on current international transactions, in the seven years 1958-64. (The U.S. surplus was $31.7 billion.) Britain therefore financed all her 1958-64 long-term foreign investment, amounting (net) to the equivalent of about $3¼ billion, by increasing her short-term obligations to foreigners. In the sterling crises of 1964-65, the counter-value of these foreign obligations—and, at least temporarily, more—was redeemed through new debts incurred to the International Monetary Fund and to various Treasuries.

By paying out *all* its liquid reserves and using up about a billion dollars of borrowings, the Labour government was able to meet the claims on sterling. But it has not yet been able to achieve any other constructive economic objects. Its "incomes policy," of voluntary restraint on wages and prices, has not yet shown success. The balance-of-payments achievement is modest. By surcharging imports and curtailing foreign invest-

* Nicholas Davenport, *The Split Society,* London, Gollancz, 1964, p. 138.

† J. C. R. Dow, *The Management of the British Economy,* Cambridge University Press, 1964, p. 70. This is a very impressive volume.

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ment, the international deficit was reduced. But British exports rose less than world trade. At best, there will be another international deficit in 1966, and earning the surplus to repay the borrowings of 1964-65 will be a long process. (Nothing in current British economic experience is remotely comparable to the dynamism displayed by Japan in rectifying *its* balance-of-payments problem through increasing exports by 33% in the first nine months of 1965.) In the effort to improve the balance, the growth of British national output was slowed to 2½% in 1965 and seems likely to be about 2% in 1966. The conventional polls regularly show that the two foremost demands of the voter on his government are "prosperity" and "peace." On the count of prosperity, the Labour government's stance is not yet strong.

THE LABOUR government's view of the future of the British economy was set forth, in September 1965, in a government document of some 500 pages, entitled *The National Plan*. What is perhaps most fundamental in this plan is that it provides for reduction of unemployment to zero—indeed below zero; it requires more labor than, on the plan's own forecast, the economy will have. To keep prices relatively stable in this full-steam economy, it counts on moral suasion—"the cooperation of labor and management," discussions, committees, reports, and delays. In this reliance, the plan's authors, more or less deliberately, rejected conventional economic opinion. In 1964, Mr. J. C. R. Dow had put forward what may be called, with all respect, an enlightened "Treasury" view. He had suggested that price stability would be greatly assisted if ". . . unemployment were kept at 2 to 2½ per cent, instead of the postwar average of 1½ per cent." Similarly, in the summer of 1965, in a report which received much publicity, the OECD recommended to Britain a policy of "running the economy with less pressure on resources." And the OECD added pointedly, "Past experience has shown that with unemployment below 1.5%, it is not realistic to hope to stabilize prices."* In *The National Plan,* such counsel was set aside.

A market economy of zero unemployment cannot avoid some administration of wages and prices. And, if this zero-unemployment economy is not also to be one of slow growth, it must create a non-market mechanism for transferring workers from industries which should decline to those which are to grow. Such a mechanism must include, at least, public provision of labor retraining and authoritative guarantees to workers that they can shift employment without loss of seniority and retirement benefits. The Labour government has hardly begun to grapple with a mechanism of this kind. Its zero-unemployment economy may therefore be inherently one of slow growth.

Piquant is the pace designated for bold expansion in the plan. Its scope is six years—1964 to 1970. If one goes back six years in the British economic record, one reaches the recession year, 1958. And if one then moves forward six years, one ends in the boom year, 1964. Now, the expansion of Gross Domestic Product in Britain from 1958 to 1964, as measured by the learned National Institute of Economic and Social Research, was 23.8%. What expansion goal does the plan then set for 1964-70? Why, of course, 25%!

In 1965, the British economy is eleventh. If the national plan is executed as designed, in 1970 Britain will still be, at best, eleventh.

IV

IF THERE IS ONE sentiment in which the overwhelming majority of the British people is united, it is the desire to abstain from the turbulent great world, in which a decent man can easily get his head broken.

British abstentionism speaks many tongues. On the moderate Left, it may invoke the United Nations. But this will naturally be a UN in which both Moscow and Peking have a veto. If international responsibility is then to include only what survives these two vetoes, it will not be very burdensome. One may confidently support such a UN, and enjoy a surge of righteousness in having given allegiance to a universal authority, without having to do much for one's allegiance.

In the British political Center, the accredited international cause of the day is early "entry" into Europe. But to be "a good European," in this context, is almost as little burdensome as to be an adherent of the UN. For one thing, de Gaulle prevents. And, after him, it is still only a Little Europe to which one might be admitted. This is a Europe which is not minded to undertake any heavy extra-European obligation. Quite consequentially, the strong British proponents of this European affiliation are equally distinguished for their rejection of any commitments "east of Suez"—or in any other noisy place.

On the Right in Britain, one might have expected a sublimation of the old imperialism into a new conception of active world responsibility. Instead, I find a firmly consolidated conviction that a sensible Britain will do best to hold itself aloof from those quarrelsome, ungrateful colored peoples—African, Indian, Malayan, Chinese, etc. etc. At most, one should trade with them, at arm's length.

A PARTY out of power gives relatively free voice to inclination. So, on October 14, 1965, the Defense Minister in the Shadow Cabinet of the Conservative party, Mr. Enoch Powell, spoke for his party with relative freedom on the basic issues of defense policy. He proposed three important things:

* Organization For Economic Cooperation and Development. Economic Surveys. *United Kingdom,* Paris, June 1965, p. 26.

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that Britain retain her own nuclear force; that she participate in the defense of Europe; that she withdraw from all other defense obligations. In Asia and Africa, Powell found "a western military presence" disturbing to the establishment of a regional "equilibrium of forces." And he expressed confidence that, in those continents, ". . . the eventual limits of Russian and Chinese advance will be fixed by a balance of forces which is itself Asiatic and African." The *Times* of London judged Powell's speech to be "literate, revealing, and at times almost lyrical." After adjusting for the British accent, an American gets the message: the Conservative party of Britain now speaks for what, in local style, used to be called America First.

The direction in which the Conservative party was moving was clearly apprehended. And, in a special article, in the *Times* (London, November 1), Sir John Slessor replied:

> . . . it is no good hoping for a balance of indigenous forces at some future date, if in the meanwhile the only free Asian powers capable of forming such a balance are swallowed up in a Chinese empire. That . . . can for the time being only be averted with Western support. . . . [Moreover] the allies of the United States are not entitled to assume that they [the United States] would be prepared to accept sole responsibility for the protection of allied interests from the Red Sea to the Pacific. . . .

But, on December 15, Mr. Powell reiterated the authoritative Conservative view. This time, he focused on fallacies in foreign policy which he found common to Winston Churchill and Harold Macmillan. And he discovered their probable common root—in both men's American mothers. Among other errors for which these ladies were perhaps responsible, he particularized the one that Britain "is irrevocably bound up with an overseas world."

Mr. Jo Grimond, the Liberal leader, does not differ substantially with Mr. Powell. First priority in Liberal foreign policy still goes to "a new initiative to enter Europe"; this radicalism the Liberals have shared since 1961 with the Conservative party. But, at the Liberal party conference of September 1965, Mr. Grimond chose to make particular sport of Harold Wilson's contention that Britain has "a peace-keeping role" not only in NATO but also "east of Suez"—in the Middle East, in India, in Malaya, in Australia, etc. (And Mr. Wilson, to his honor be it credited, had not said he could count on this role being accomplished through the UN.) Peace-keeping "east of Suez," said Mr. Grimond, had brought two major wars; the sooner Britain withdrew from such activities the better. His Liberal forebears were Little Englanders; he is a Little European.

But this trend to withdraw from the great world passes all party limits. The great majority of Labour people are today also, I believe, either Little England or Little Europe in conviction. Mr. Joel Barnett, a Labour M.P., states their views with great lucidity.* Basically, ". . . as a nation we simply do not any longer have the capacity to play a major military role on the world stage." Therefore, "We should . . . be making arrangements now to withdraw our forces from Malaysia." Further, "The other major commitment East of Suez, that is to India, must also regretfully be treated in the same way." Mr. Barnett denies us only one final candor—but it is implicit in his position: that he would terminate all British responsibility also for the defense of Australia and New Zealand.

AN OUTSIDER must presume that there are two voices in Mr. Harold Wilson's cabinet—both hesitant. One is a voice of Little England—but what are we to do about the Negro people of Rhodesia? The other is a voice of Great Britain—but how are we to carry the expense? Mr. Wilson and Mr. Denis Healey (Defense Minister) seem to be the most consistent spokesmen for a Great Britain. But they are then separated from the great mass of their followers. Perhaps that is why, in Washington, their voices sometimes sound a little equivocal. On December 15, 1965, at the NATO council meeting, Mr. McNamara sketched a decades-forward perspective of possible Chinese policy: the general championing of revolutionary wars; a growing military potential; and China's immediate threatening posture regarding Thailand. Mr. Healey is reported to have ". . . supported these views by saying that it might be necessary one day to switch the balance of forces from Europe to Asia."† Is this authoritative British government conviction? Is it firm for a year, or for a life? I do not believe official Washington knows. And I, for one, do not know.

It is in defense expenditure that Labour intends to reflect Britain's diminished role in the great world. In 1952, Britain spent about 10% of her Gross National Product on defense, and in 1964 about 6%; it is planned that in 1970 she will be spending 5%. (The defense budget is to be held to the equivalent of $5.6 billion, at 1964 prices.) In 1964, when the United Kingdom labor force was one-third that of the United States, the manpower of the British armed forces numbered less than one-sixth the American. No doubt, for 1970 the planned relationship is still smaller.

Cynical and silly voices have suggested that the United States attempt to buy United Kingdom adherence to a policy of Great Britain, for the next

* Joel Barnett, "East of Suez," in *Socialist Commentary*, October 1965, pp. 5-6.

† Quotation from the *Times* of London, Dec. 16, 1965. A sensible case for Little Europe is made by Kenneth Younger, formerly Minister of State at the Foreign Office, in his *Changing Perspectives in British Foreign Policy*, Oxford, 1964. But a more thoughtful and, I believe, more far-sighted position is defended by John Mander in his *Great Britain or Little England?*, Houghton Mifflin, 1964.

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years—until some Asian stabilization is achieved. Five components of price are indicated. *First*: direct U.S. Treasury assistance to sterling. *Second*: American sponsorship of a plan for extending repayment on the debts incurred by Britain in 1964-65. *Third*: joint U.S.-U.K. pressure to conclude, in 1966 or 1967, a scheme for expanding international monetary liquidity—if need be excluding those countries who refuse to go along. *Fourth*: sale of American aircraft carriers and planes to Britain at concessionary prices. *Fifth*: American participation in the costs of overseas British bases.

Each of these five points has its independent merits. But all together, in this historic context, they add up to nothing. The convictions of a great people—and of serious national leaders—cannot be bought. And those that can be bought are not worth this much money. Mr. Wilson and his colleagues will choose a policy involving continued British responsibility in world politics if they are convinced that such a policy is right, and if they believe Britain to possess the necessary means. United States support may somewhat enlarge the means. But the views of the U.S. are a minor consideration in reaching the conviction of rightness.

A British government must forge its own rejection of Little England and Little Europe. And if the present British government makes this rejection, if it chooses the path of a Great Britain, it will now encounter the determined opposition of both the Conservative party and the Liberal party. It will also be moving against the current of inclinations of the greater number of its own followers in the ranks of Labour.

V

Some of Britain's own children call her old and stagnant and without zest for life.* I have no comprehensive judgment of this kind. The youth and age of individual life afford no meaningful analogy to social or cultural development. The cycle of the generations is always renewed.

Others point to an apparent increased willingness of Britain's sons and daughters to emigrate, abandoning involvement with their native community. But 1931-38 is the *only* peacetime period of the past century when there was *not* a net emigration of British citizens. And, to the 1956-61 "brain drain" of scientists and engineers to the United States, several other European countries—Switzerland, Norway, Netherlands, Sweden, and Germany—contributed relatively more than the United Kingdom.† In the end, a reasoned judgment that a disturbingly large share of native talent is leaving Britain would have to depend on a range of knowledge which I do not possess.

In relative economic advancement and in weight for the world economy, Britain has certainly declined greatly. There is no reason to believe this relative decline is about to be reversed: the current rule of Labour has no such significance. Nevertheless, the absolute increase in real income per person achieved by the United Kingdom in the fifteen years 1950 to 1965 was greater than in the fifty years 1900 to 1950. A relative decline may still have some of the sweetness of success.

In socialist pioneering, contemporary Britain has little of interest. Its public corporations and industry boards are like everybody's corporations and boards. Of experimentation with new socialist forms, Israel has much more. Of success in managing an economy with no unemployment, Sweden is a far better model.

In world politics, Britain is unique among the countries of western Europe in still having some considerable weight outside Europe. But it is not yet clear whether the Labour government will be willing and able—against all opposition—to reestablish some pattern of world responsibility as a continuing aspect of British public life.

Labour's approach to social-welfare provision involves little novelty; still it is, I believe, characterized by greater sincerity of involvement than that of other British parties. Similarly, the Labour government has, as yet, little success to record in conducting an economy of publicly administered wages and prices; but Britain will apparently have such an economy in the next years, and Labour is then, I think, better situated than other parties to direct it. Also, it is possible to question the solidity of Labour's commitment to world obligations outside Europe; but it is, I believe, not possible to deny that a meaningful commitment to a world politics of responsibility, among British party leaderships, is to be found in 1966—if at all—only among the leadership of Labour.

For these reasons, whoever wishes well to Britain will also, in my judgment, now wish a long life to Labour government.

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* In July 1963, Arthur Koestler edited an issue of *Encounter* devoted to these themes.

† C. Freeman and A. Young, *The Research and Development Effort*, OECD, Paris, December 1965, Table 9.

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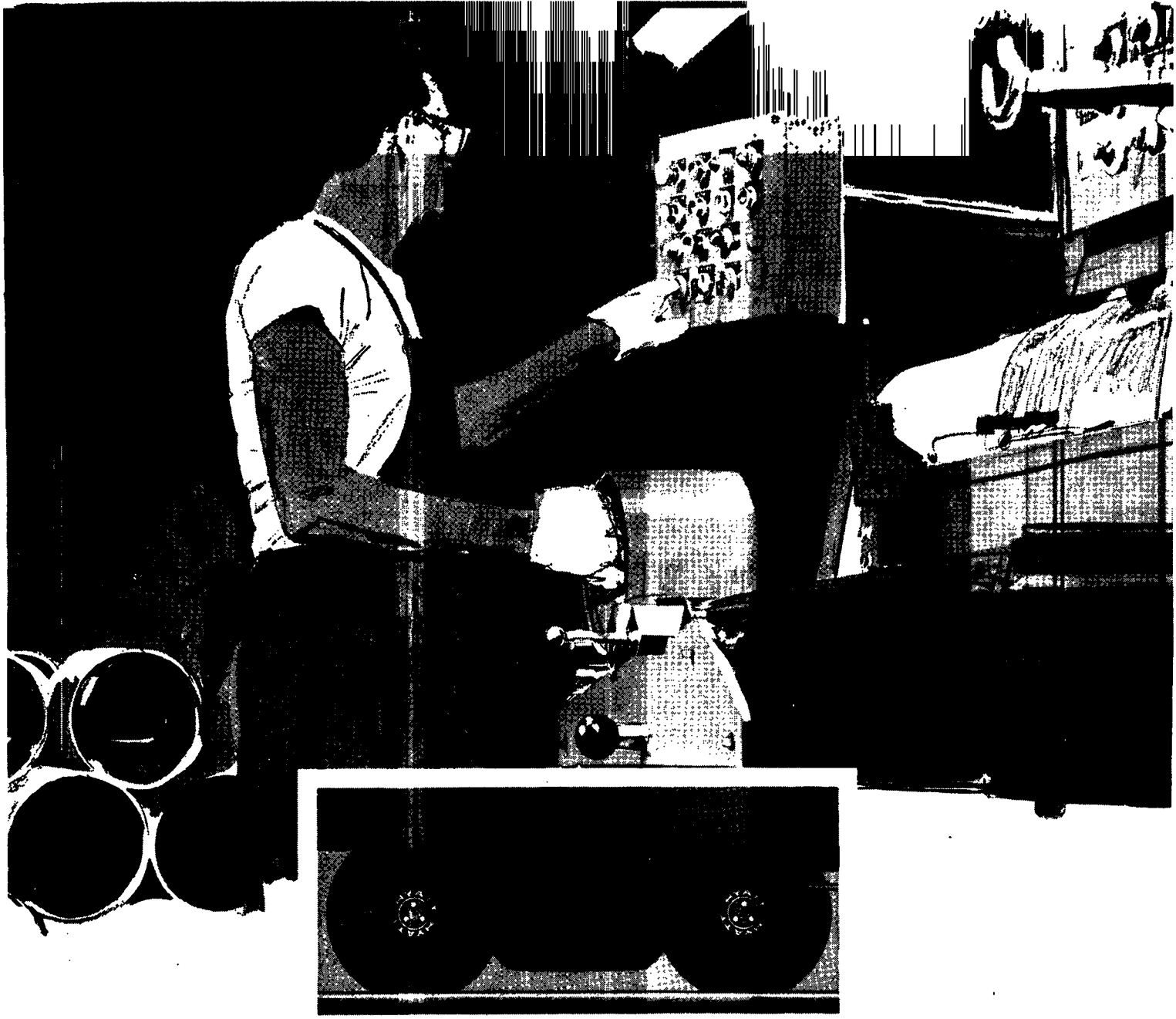

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THE *TREFA* BANQUET

John J. Appel

On Wednesday evening, July 11, 1883, some two hundred persons gathered for dinner at the Cincinnati Highland House, a hilltop resort and restaurant overlooking the Ohio river and the Kentucky hills. Sponsored by a group of Cincinnati Jews who preferred to remain anonymous, the event was meant to honor the delegates to the eighth annual council meeting of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and the first graduating class of the Hebrew Union College. Among the guests were members of Cincinnati's Jewish upper class as well as non-Jewish judges, clergymen, and professors from the local university. The Cincinnati *Enquirer* described the affair as a "Jewish Jollification"; in American Jewish history it has become known as the "*trefa* banquet," an important link in a chain of events that was finally to lead to a break between Reform and Conservative Judaism.

For the account of what happened that July summer night, historians have to a large extent relied on the memoirs of David Philipson, one of the four young men ordained as rabbi at Cincinnati's Plum Street Temple on the afternoon of the same day. In *My Life as an American Jew* (published in 1941), Rabbi Philipson recalled that after the guests had been seated, the invocation spoken, and the waiters signalled to serve the first course, "terrific excitement" broke out among the diners, seated under the gas lights of the Highland House banquet hall. "Two rabbis rose from their seats and rushed from the room. Shrimp had been placed before them as the opening course of the elaborate menu."

According to Rabbi Philipson, the "orthodox Eastern press rang the changes on the '*trefa* banquet' week in, week out," and the event furnished the opening for the movement that culminated in the founding of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and the establishment of the Conservative wing in the American synagogue. He explained the incident as the failure of a Jewish caterer to provide a strictly kosher meal, though he had been explicitly instructed to do so. And this, by and large, has become the standard explanation found in the standard histories of American Judaism.

Convinced that the event warranted re-examination, and not satisfied that a caterer's whim or oversight was responsible for the "*trefa* banquet," I determined to piece together whatever data could be located about this controversial dinner. In the course of my investigations, I discovered a complete version of the bill of fare served that night. Following is the menu for the "*trefa* banquet" exactly as it appeared in the pages of the Cincinnati *Enquirer* for July 12, 1883. (I have retained misspellings or printer's errors.)

Menu

Little Neck Clams (half shell)
Amontillado Sherry

Potages
Consommé Royal
Sauternes

Poissons
Fillet de Boef, aux Champignons
Soft-shell Crabs
a l'Amerique, Pommes Duchesse
Salade of Shrimps

St. Julien

Entree
Sweet Breads a la Monglas
Petits Pois a la Francaise
Diedescheimer

Relevee
Poulets a la Viennoise
Asperges Sauce,
Vinaigrette Pommes Pate
Roman Punch
Grenouiles a la Creme
and Cauliflower
Roti

Vol au Vents de Pigeons,
a la Tyrolienne
Salade de Saitue
G. H. Mumm Extra Dry

Hors D'Oeuvers
Bouchies de Volaille, a la Regeurs
Olives Caviv, Sardeiles de Hollands
Brissotins au Supreme Tomatoe
Mayonaise
Sucres

Ice-Cream
Assorted and Ornamented Cakes
Entrements

Fromages Varies Fruits Varies

Martell Cognac
Cafe Noir

I was persuaded of the accuracy of the *Enquirer*'s account after collating it with several partial versions of the menu which appeared in American, English, and German-Jewish newspapers at the time. My researches also disclosed that the meal was supervised by Gus Lindeman, purveyor of food and drink for the Allemania Club, whose membership was composed of Cincinnati's wealthiest German Jews—among them those who arranged and paid for the Highland House dinner.

The menu shows that Little Neck Clams rather than shrimp, as Rabbi Philipson thought, had the distinction of first offending those diners who observed *kashruth*. Nor did clams constitute the only violation of *kashruth;* the menu included soft-shell crabs, shrimp salad, frogs' legs, and *milchig* desserts (ice-cream and assorted cheeses) served after the meat courses. Even a cursory knowledge of what hotel

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men call "mass feeding procedures" should convince anyone that this array of ritually forbidden dishes for an important ceremonial dinner was not simply the result of a caterer's oversight.

If it was not, how then is the "*trefa* banquet" to be explained? The investigation inevitably leads to the words and deeds of Rabbi Isaac M. Wise, at that time president of the Hebrew Union College, and—according to his contemporary detractors—the "Pope" of American Reform Judaism. The Highland House dinner certainly lent substance to the charge made by rabbis of conservative bent that Wise was encouraging the abrogation of traditional observances.* I must therefore emphasize that I found no evidence to show that Rabbi Wise knew in advance of the plans by the Cincinnati Banquet Committee to serve *trefa* food. Indeed, it is reasonable to assume that he was too good a politician and organizer to condone plans that were certain to offend the influential Orthodox element among the members of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the supporters of Hebrew Union College. My own conclusion is that the *trefa* banquet was deliberately arranged, probably without Rabbi Wise's knowledge, by some of his supporters among Cincinnati businessmen.

BUT ONE CANNOT leave it at that. The fact is that whether or not Isaac M. Wise knew of the banquet committee's plans—and he disavowed any knowledge—he refused to condemn what was unquestionably an affront to the sensibilities of those guests who observed *kashruth*. Moreover, in the months following the Highland House dinner, he shifted from a weak defense of the anonymous hosts to an intemperate attack on the practice of *kashruth* as such. His reactions to the "*trefa* banquet" constitute an essential part of the story and deserve further attention.

Rabbi Wise's first response was to pronounce both the Council meeting and the dinner an unqualified success. He expressed himself to this effect in two weeklies edited by him, the *American Israelite* and the German-language *Die Deborah*. (Both papers furnish important evidence for his and his supporters' views; a study of *Die Deborah* is especially revealing because of Wise's habit of treating it as his personal mouthpiece and holding forth in it with less restraint than in its English-language equivalent.†)

It soon became evident, however, that the matter was not to rest there. One of the first public intimations that the harmony of the Cincinnati proceedings had been marred by the "*trefa* banquet" appeared in the "religious news" section of the New York *Herald* on July 22, 1883. An anonymous report, signed "Historical Platform," deplored the fact that the Cincinnati meetings had accomcomplished little except to promote fraternity, that the Hebrew Union College did not prepare its students satisfactorily for the rabbinate, and that the "rabbis and laymen, assembled for a Jewish interest, instead of rising in a body and leaving the hall, sat down and participated" in a *trefa* dinner. Subsequently, the Philadelphia *Jewish Record* and the *American Hebrew* also took up the issue.

WHEN his Eastern critics thus began to demand an explanation of and apology for the Highland House affair, Wise begged to be excused from further discussions. In the *American Israelite* for August 3, 1883, he wrote that he did not wish "to belittle a number of generous and hospitable gentlemen" on account of their caterer's error, and he asked his critics to remember that the American Hebrew's religion "centers not in kitchen and stomach." He concluded:

> The fact is that the said chief cook, himself a Jew, wool-dyed, was placed there to bring before the guests a *kosher* meal. So it was understood in Cincinnati all along, and we do not know why he diversified his menu with multipeds and bivalves. If any of the committee gave him such orders, they are responsible to those who appointed them, not to us, not to any newspaper, not to the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, none of whom had anything to do with the entertainment given to the guests connected with the Council.

Such an explanation inevitably failed to conciliate his critics. Two weeks later, Wise admitted in the *Deborah* that "because the Cincinnati Banquet Committee allowed a few dishes to be served which are forbidden according to Jewish ritual law," those who applaud liberal *thoughts* now "make a great to-do" because "liberal thoughts appeal to reason" but "liberal *actions* come in conflict with unthinking prejudice."

In Wise's opinion, the issue of the "*trefa* banquet" was merely a pretext for striking at the Hebrew Union College and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. In responding to what he considered the real issue, he soon abandoned all talk of a caterer's oversight, and transformed the Highland House Dinner first into a test case of liberal convictions and gradually into an act of assertion of the "new" Judaism. Thus in *Die Deborah* of November 2, 1883, Wise insisted that further explanations of the "*trefa* banquet" were unnecessary because the large majority of American Jews were indifferent to dietary laws, and because Orthodox Jewish customs "cheapened" Judaism before the public.

THE MOST outspoken exposition of this point of view came from the Denver correspondent of *Die Deborah*, one Rabbi Schreiber, who coupled it with a slashing attack on the "open and hidden enemies" of Wise, the College, and the Union. Dr. Schreiber described Wise's critics as "ignorant fanatics" and the Cincinnati dinner as a fitting occasion to declare "publicly and emphatically" that "kitchen Judaism" should be relegated "to the antique cabinet where it belongs." Why should a dozen men whose religion depended upon abstention from oysters and lobsters

* On this point, see *The Emergence of Conservative Judaism* by Moshe Davis, 1963.

† This tendency has been analyzed in an excellent article by Professor Joseph Gutman, "Watchman on the American Rhine: New Light on Isaac M. Wise," in the October 1958 *American Jewish Archives*.

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decide what others, who liked these dishes, should eat? Who forced them to eat *trefa* dishes when so many fine kosher foods had also been available? The "humbug" of the dietary laws must go, for they "promote clannishness, Jewish exclusiveness, even fanaticism" and they make Judaism "ridiculous, Lilliputian, demeaning."

NOR was the counterattack limited to words. When the Free Sons of Israel, a fraternal order, met for a week-long convention in Cincinnati in March 1884, about five hundred delegates assembled at Eureka Hall for a dinner catered by Gus Lindeman, whose previous "error" had not diminished his popularity. Rabbi Wise, a member of the order, reproduced the full menu in the *American Israelite* and noted that it was "printed on a silk scroll, similar in form to that upon which the Jewish law is written." Readers of the *Deborah* were reminded that everything consumed at Eureka Hall was kosher "except the oysters." That same month Grand Lodge No. 4 of *Kesher Shel Barzel,* another fraternal order, met in Cleveland and dined on oysters, lobsters, and similar delicacies. Continuing its offensive, the *Israelite* reprinted this menu as well, and reminded its readers that it was *not by accident* that members of both orders had consumed oysters on the half-shell.

"Ebn Samiel," the *Israelite*'s Chicago correspondent, predicted that the serving of oysters in Cincinnati would "undoubtedly become occasion for new assaults" against the president of Hebrew Union College. In the name of Chicago Jews, he offered to take the blame for this "second mortal sin against the Jewish stomach" on the grounds that the convention's presiding officer had been from Chicago, and Chicago Jews had been the first to entertain Jewish conventions at non-Jewish hotels. Why feign compliance to dietary laws in public when no one observed them privately? "The new Judaism has a right to assert itself," he concluded. "And in the very publicity of such occasions, we want to show our face."

In April 1884, Wise's quarrel with his critics led to his censure by Congregation Rodef Sholem of Philadelphia. A "memorial" adopted at a general meeting and sent to the Executive Board of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, accused him of lacking "scholarly earnestness, dignity and respect for the worth and character of others," and asserted that his public utterances as president of Hebrew Union College gave "grounds for alarm concerning the example set to its students for the ministry." The indictment singled out an *American Israelite* editorial of July 27, 1883—concerning the "*trefa* banquet"—and objected to the "low tone" of Wise's remarks about rabbis and the Jewish press.

Eventually, the charges were referred to a committee of five, appointed by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. The committee rejected the complaints as attempted censorship of a newspaperman's "forcible and vigorous" prose and cleared Wise by noting that his labors entitled him to warmest support, high esteem, and personal respect. Though the editor of the *American Hebrew* (July 18, 1884) called the committee's report a "whitewash" of Wise, the latter informed the readers of *Die Deborah* that the "crusade" against him had ended with his exoneration. In point of fact, the schism between Wise and his critics was in no way mended by his "exoneration." In this connection, it suffices to cite three important dates from the historical record. In 1885, a group of Eastern Reform rabbis met in Pittsburgh and successfully challenged Rabbi Wise's leadership; in 1887, the Jewish Theological Seminary of New York was established as a rival rabbinical training school to the Hebrew Union College; and in 1889 the Central Conference of American Rabbis—an organization of conservative Reform rabbis—was set up.

Such, then, were the after-effects of the "*trefa* banquet." Returning now to the event itself, we may note that the whole rancorous feud over the observance of the dietary laws occurred at a time when many American Jews had already ceased to observe *kashruth*. Among other things, the Highland House dinner is a nearly perfect expression of the

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assimilationist tendencies among American Jews in the 19th century, especially among German Jews. So strong was the propensity of the members of the Banquet Committee to regard conformity to Gentile norms as an unquestioned virtue, that they deliberately chose to make an issue of serving *trefa* food in public. It must be admitted that their choice showed a good deal of sociological awareness, for the adoption of the majority culture's food customs has always been one of the first and most significant means of a minority group's assimilation. Conversely, the retention of food preferences and prohibitions continues even today to provide a ready index for the degree of cultural pluralism that is to be found on the American scene.

YET FOR ALL their assimilationist yearnings, the wealthy Cincinnati Jews who arranged the Highland House Dinner chose to remain Jews. Therefore, they required an appropriate theological justification for abrogating *kashruth*, and this is precisely what Rabbi Wise provided for them. One of his biographers has concluded that Wise's method of interpretation of the Pentateuch probably gave him sanction for whatever he wished to advocate respecting the dietary laws. According to this approach, oysters, apparently the high-status food for 19th-century American Reform Jews—today it has been replaced by the shrimp cocktail—could be (and were) proved to be both kosher and *trefa* by Rabbi Wise at different times in his long career.*

Rabbi Wise's own motives in all this are not clear. He himself remained an observer of *kashruth*, and we do not know whether he approved of the actions of his congregants, or whether he merely felt constrained to defend his employers. What is clear, however, is that he used his considerable talents to furnish a rationalization for those who found *kashruth* a burden. Thus, at the conclusion of a series of lectures on "Dietary Laws and Sanitary Measures" in 1883, he said:

> Whoever wants to be more or most conscientious in these matters, and surround these Mosaic laws with the rabbinical "fences" is certainly doing right if he is conscientious in the matter, and thinks he does all that in order to worship God and obey his laws. But he who does not submit to all those ordinances, and is guided by the simple directions of Moses in this matter, is certainly no sinner, and may be a true and faithful son or daughter of the Covenant. There is a law which stands higher than all dietary laws, and that is "Be no fanatic," which translated in our vulgar language would sound somewhat like this: "Be intelligent, and allow your reason to govern your passions, propensities and superstitions."

A study of the "*trefa* banquet" inevitably leads to a somewhat altered portrait of Rabbi Wise, who has hitherto been considered as a *moderate* Reformer. At least in this affair, he fought back stubbornly, tactlessly, and with a zeal seemingly out of all proportion to the cause at issue. His editorials reveal a man apparently neither caring for nor understanding the deep hold of traditional practice on his fellow Jews, a doctrinaire Reformer zealous to bring Judaism into line with American customs and apparently blind to the fact that attacks on others' habits and preferences are bound to create controversies which appeals to reason cannot resolve.

All this was long ago, as the following incident will make clear. In March of 1965 I presented a paper on the "*trefa* banquet" at the 63rd Annual Meeting of the American Jewish Historical Society in Cincinnati. Greeting the delegates at a dinner meeting, Dr. Nelson Glueck, President of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, remarked that the repast about to be served, though catered, was strictly kosher. Times do change—and so does Reform Judaism.

JOHN J. APPEL, *a new contributor, teaches American history and literature at Michigan State University.*

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* See D. Wilanski, *Sinai to Cincinnati*, 1937.

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ON RANDALL JARRELL

R. W. Flint

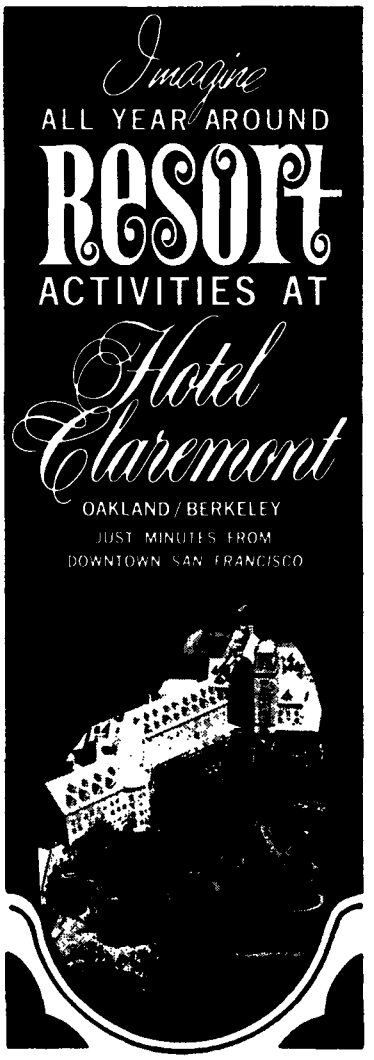
Freedom, farewell! Or so the soldiers say;
And all the freedoms they spent yesterday
Lure from beyond the graves, a war away.
The cropped skulls resonate the wistful lies
Of dead civilians: truth, reason, justice;
The foolish ages haunt their unaccepting eyes.

From the green gloom of the untroubled seas
Their little bones (the coral of the histories)
Foam into marches, exultation, victories:
Who will believe the blood curled like a moan
From the soaked lips, a century from home—
The slow lives sank from being like a dream?

Randall Jarrell, who died last autumn in what seems clearly to have been a tragic accident, was in many ways the wonder and terror of American poetry during the late 40's and early 50's. Like Shelley, as Robert Lowell fondly describes him after a friendship of thirty years, in his "harsh luminosity," he could glide for days against the sun, swooping down every so often with murderous effect on the warblers and thrushes. Not many readers knew where to find him, or indeed sometimes, to their dismay, where not to find him. After the publication of his novel, *Pictures from an Institution,* in 1952, and his critical collection, *Poetry and the Age,* in 1955, books so amusing, high-spirited, accurate, and original that they often confirmed an easy prejudice (of which I have been guilty) that he was a better critic than poet, he apparently retired to his private Weimar at Greensboro, North Carolina, to teach, write poetry, prefaces, children's books—seemingly a domesticated lion. To say that he had been a disturbing figure during his years as poetry editor of the *Nation* would be a rash understatement. Not since Poe had an American poet of his distinction laid down the law in quite such a carnival spirit. He reached maturity at the climax of the New-Critical era, whose excesses he both relished and deplored with brilliant finality, and could not have been the kind of poet he was had he not been an equally good critic. To look back on his ascendancy when the connective tissue between the beauty and maganimity of much of his writing and the bacchic exhilaration of his rejections and dislikes may have been hard to discern—impossible for a few of his unlucky victims—is, for me, to rediscover how quickly he had won my trust without my knowing exactly why, and how much in his debt many of us were.

There were two peaks, at the beginning and end of his public life, when his full quality was active in his poetry. I agree entirely with Lowell that "His gifts, both by nature and by a lifetime of hard dedication and growth, were wit, pathos, and brilliance of intelligence. These qualities, dazzling in themselves, were often so well employed that he became, I think, the most heart-breaking English poet of his generation." He made his debut as a war poet of astonishing poise and fullness for so young a man; for several older critics who had recognized his quality immediately and done it justice, but who lost him in the radical-pastoral, romantically nostalgic, bitter-sweet idylls of his middle career, Randell Jarrell remained *the* poet of the war.

RETURNING to the war poems twenty years after their appearance in *Blood for a Stranger, Little Friend, Little Friend,* and *Losses,* is something of a revelation. I had taken them in, a few whole poems and many wonderfully effective images, but had somehow missed the magnificence they have for me now, perhaps vaguely expecting an equal magnificence from another poet in a style more congenial to my experience of the war. There was no other poet, none who came within shouting distance of Jarrell. That he had been, like Whitman, very lucky in his circumstances, neither too far in the fighting nor too far out, a true airman in every figurative sense, and even better prepared by genius and training to render the particulars of war by



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diffraction from a radically civilized and simple philosophy (or "strategy," if you prefer John Crowe Ransom's hallowed term)—all this was obscured from some of us who had been closer to the action and wore a veteran's foolish pride not quite lightly enough, forgetting that the civilian Whitman and Melville had been the Civil War poets, resisting a repetition of the mud-soaked griefs of Wilfred Owen and Isaac Rosenberg in World War I, looking perhaps for poetry more in the jaunty style of Howard Nemerov in America or Keith Douglas in England; something abrupt and hard-bitten, steeped in romantic disillusion and military slang; brief, sweeping, dismissive ironies, like the crushing out of a last cigarette before take-off.

By 1945 everyone knew what the motto of the war had been . . . *hurry up and wait.* Jarrell knew it. But the long patience of outfacing a worn-out myth of heroism took, on the surface where most war poetry gets written, a very different form in the average serviceman's mind than it did in Jarrell's. For the soldier, the flyer, especially the carrier-based flyer (I had been a ship's-company gunner on a carrier for the last year in the Pacific), it was a matter of killing boredom by devotion to the technical niceties of the job, for which we were truly but ambiguously grateful. Nothing in my ship's distant engagements with the Japanese (we were protected by an immense screen of other ships) matched, for ship's-company gunners, the excitement of shooting down drone planes with our ultra-new, line-of-fire-radar fire-control system hot off Norbert Wiener's drawing board at M.I.T. I realize now that only Jarrell's poetry was equal to expressing the weird congeries of horrors and distractions the war became in its final months; yet, on the "front," we lacked either the whole heart or the whole mind to make his splendidly simple sense of it. As possible poets, he judges us retrospectively among the losses.

The idea grew, therefore, among younger readers that he had taken the soft option for a poet of the 40's, had been culpably sentimental, even patronizing. He had moved backward to the pitying spirit of Owen and behind that to the radically pessimistic, panoramic, world-historical spirit of Hardy, or the great, scathing war episodes in Byron's *Don Juan.* What one least expected, I think, was this intensely private, learned, sure, *ready* voice of Jarrell, sounding now like Hardy's Ancient Spirit of the Years, Spirit of the Pities, Spirits Sinister and Ironic (of *The Dynasts*), now in the high Parnassian of some Lecomte de Lisle of the prairies, now pathetic to the verge of baby-talk, now ferociously graphic. Above all, it took time to absorb the poems' general monotony of effect, the mind they make, their static grandeur of sentience. A ground-tone of swaying iambics varied by spondees and syncopation, paired and tripled adjectives in wistful or angry clumps, a recurring litany of abstractions: the State, the States, Death, Dream, fire, the years, the cities—the soldier-prisoner-patient, his wife, mail, and cat. A fastidiously inhibited poet, finding in a world gone nearly insane with distraction the "blind" certainties of unlettered feeling he had recently absorbed from Whitman, Hardy, and Rilke; a very American epic of acceptance. No poet was better prepared, these peculiarities notwithstanding, to swallow the war whole, to make it his, to provide so many vivid, oblique glimpses of an existence whose official aspect he knew all too well.

What was it, then, that saved him from drowning in his influences and gave him strength to extend a powerful arc of vision over the Second World War to Korea, Vietnam, and the new age of technocratic wars? Firsthand knowledge, of course, as a land-based flight instructor who had flown himself, but more essentially, a passion to make the reader *see,* to concentrate his whole moral effort in an act of sight, leaving to "philosophy" those tenuous exchanges of condition and role—Life into Death into Dream into Death again—that encompass his plain, original, very poetic idea of knowledge.

I quote two of the best short poems that show his movement from a masterly but still fairly traditional pathos to a full-scale pathos of concrete vision:

A Field Hospital

He stirs, beginning to awake.
A kind of ache
Of knowing troubles his blind warmth; he moans,
And the high hammering drone
Of the first crossing fighters shakes
His sleep to pieces, rakes
The darkness with its skidding bursts, is done.
All that he has known

Floods in upon him; but he dreads
The crooked thread
Of fire upon the darkness: "The great drake
Flutters to the icy lake—
The shotguns stammer in my head.
I lie in my own bed,"
He whispers, "dreaming"; and he thinks to wake.
The old mistake.

A cot creaks; and he hears the groan
He thinks his own—
And groans, and turns his stitched, blind, bandaged head
Up to the tent-flap, red
With dawn. A voice says, "Yes, this one";
His arm stings; then, alone,
He neither knows, remembers—but instead
Sleeps, comforted.

A Front

Fog over the base: the beams ranging
From the five towers pull home from the night
The crews cold in fur, the bombers banging
Like lost trucks down the levels of the ice.
A glow drifts in like mist (how many tons of it?),
Bounces to a roll, turns suddenly to steel
And tires and turrets, huge in the trembling light.
The next is high, and pulls up with a wail,
Comes round again—no use. And no use for the rest
In drifting circles out along the range;
Holding no longer, changed to a kinder course,

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The flights drone southward through the steady rain.
The base is closed. . . . But one voice keeps on calling,
The lowering pattern of the engines grows;
The roar gropes downward in its shaky orbit
For the lives the season quenches. Here below
They beg, order, are not heard; and hear the darker
Voice rising: Can't you hear me? Over. Over—
All the air quivers, and the east sky glows.

I have avoided those somewhat coercive adjectives, "tender" and "compassionate," not, God knows, that the poetry is not all of both in an ultimate sense, but because in the best poems these qualities are so much the whole story that it seems indecent to mention them, extended beyond the usual limits to literally everything; men, machines, landscape, women, children—everything. He moves beyond the avuncular-idyllic manner of Whitman's *Drum-Taps,* beyond the lovable Kipling fantasy of marching, camp-fires, and taverns, beyond even the comradeliness of Owen, to a place that mixes pity and philosophy, exact knowledge of war and sympathy for its victims, on a grand scale; a fresh visionary tension. The air force is the new military elite. In addition to its usual disciplines, it seems to foster an anarchy of spirit that begets its own antidote—distaste for war—more readily than earlier kinds of militarism. After the first Futurist inanities of Italian flyers over Ethiopia, no airman has, to my knowledge, written anything good that might be construed as glamorizing war. What Jarrell imagined with great clarity and force was this final detachment of the flyer, the dumb animism of his life among the planes and the planes' lives among themselves, the rarefaction and dissolution of most of the earth-bound certitudes of earlier wars. He thereby gives us a new measure of war altogether, in spite of the persistence of its older forms.

I REMEMBER being shown on the carrier a movie in color about carriers called *The Fighting Lady,* some of it shot earlier from my gun mount. It had a sickly sweetness around the edges that must have revolted Jarrell if he saw the film at home, as I imagine he did. His splendid long poem, "Pilots, Man Your Planes," is a demonstration of how the same thing should be done. Here are the last eleven lines:

The planes fly off looking for a carrier,
Destroyers curve in their long hunting arcs
Through the dead of the carrier: the dazed, vomiting,
Oil-blackened and fire-blistered, saved or dying men
Cling with cramped shaking fingers to the lines
Lowered from their old life: the pilot
Drugged in a blanket, straining up to gulp
From the mug that scrapes like chalk against his mouth,
Knows, knows at last; he yawns the chattering yawn
Of effort and anguish, of hurt hating helplessness—
Yawns sobbingly, his head falls back, he sleeps.

This reaching back for an older mode of writing about war was also a reaching forward to the solitary terrors of the "small-scale" professional wars to come, fought by the new soldier-technician with his elaborately absorbing gear, somewhere beneath the headlines about burning Caribbean cruise ships and the almost normal politics and holidays of home. It is a world where islands on a map are dragons, where planes are "green, made beasts run home to air," where the soldier is set before a blackboard to learn, "the rifle steady at (his) back,/ The functions of a variable: to die." In other words, a pure and *evil* irrationality. The poet's deepest pity is for what these clumsy mechanical animals and their child-guardians might become in rational circumstances, free of the ugly necessity, at just this time and place, of a fire-birth into mere legend.

R. W. FLINT's literary essays and reviews *appear frequently in journals such as* Partisan Review *and the* New York Review of Books. *His most recent contribution to* COMMENTARY *was a review of Susan Sontag's* The Benefactor *and Ivan Gold's* Nickel Miseries *which appeared in our December 1963 issue.*

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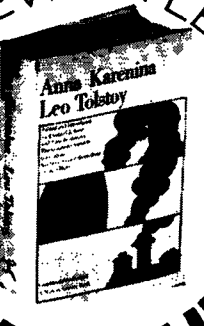

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DIMINISHED RESPONSIBILITY

THE TRIAL OF JACK RUBY. By JOHN KAPLAN and JON R. WALTZ. *Macmillan. 392 pp. $7.95.*

Reviewed by MARTIN MAYER

THOUGH THE PUBLISHERS claim on the jacket that this intelligent report "will entertain and inform lawyers and laymen alike," it is hard to believe that *The Trial of Jack Ruby* can find many readers. Even for the diseased imagination of Clio, the psychopath of muses, the Jack Ruby story is a remarkably distasteful accomplishment: everything to be learned from it is discouraging. Moreover, except for a demonstration that the Dallas police, prosecutors, and jury were considerably more capable than Northern newspapers had led us to believe, the book does not tell us much of importance that we do not already know—there is no news in the information that Ruby was an unbalanced roughneck, that Melvin Belli made a fool of himself and a condemned man of his client, that one of the prosecuting attorneys had sadistic tendencies, and that the judge in the case was a clown.

Still, there are nasty details that have not been common knowledge:

• NBC's offer to help pay the counsel fees if the Ruby family would retain San Francisco's Jake Ehrlich, prototype for the hero of the *Sam Benedict* TV serial;

• The scene in the prison after Ruby's conviction, when two of his lawyers smuggled in a miniature camera and took pictures of their shell-shocked client, intending to sell the photos to *Life;*

• Judge Brown's letter to *his* publishers in which he wrote about defense allegations that he had a pecuniary interest in ruling on Ruby's motions for a new trial. "I can refute that," he wrote, "by stating . . . that I have not begun to write a book." Then he added, "We have approximately 190 pages complete . . ."

• Prosecuting attorney Bill Alexander's slip into "Oswald loved life" during his summation to the jury, revealing the extent to which even the demand for a death penalty can become a matter of habit. ("My experience at the Bar," Max Steuer, the greatest of 20th-century American trial lawyers, once said in open court, "has taught me that prosecutors, as a rule, are persons who love human blood.")

• The circumstances of the oral report to defense counsel Melvin Belli by psychiatrists Manfred Guttmacher and Walter Bromberg after they had first examined Ruby. They saw Belli only at an exuberant party the lawyer was giving in a Dallas restaurant, where, as Kaplan and Waltz delicately put it, "they were not able to convey much detailed information to their host."

And these matters, God save us, are part of History. So there is, after all, a value in having the whole bag of details gathered in one place and tied together with the ironic detachment of two young law professors. Neither of the authors is credited on the jacket with any previous publications, but those interested in school integration will remember Kaplan as the author of a fine report to the Civil Rights Commission (and a pair of major articles in the *Northwestern Law Review*) on the New Rochelle desegregation case.

KAPLAN and Waltz assume the truth of the official version of the Kennedy assassination, and allow themselves the luxury of a brief *reductio ad absurdum* of the silly conspiracy theories that have been floating about, especially in Europe, since November 1963. (They hypothesize an "imaginative historian" who argues that Ruby did not kill Oswald, that someone else in the crowd did it while Ruby made a diversion: "Although there was testimony that Oswald's side showed a circular powder burn and a bullet hole, there was no testimony that the bullet hole was *within* the circle.") The story of the two murders is told quickly, and the authors plunge into the labyrinthine question of how the criminal law and the adversary system of criminal procedure could be made to do justice in the case of Jack Ruby.

THOUGH THEY are formally discreet about expressing opinions, there is not much question about what Kaplan and Waltz would have regarded as a just result of the Ruby trial: a conviction for murder without malice under Texas law, and a sentence of something under five years. They also obviously believe that a result of this sort could have been achieved through the trial strategy proposed by Tom Howard, a Dallas police-court lawyer who was Ruby's first counsel. This approach would have stressed that the man Ruby killed was Oswald, and that the crime could not have been premeditated in the common-sense definition of the word (though it could have been in the legal sense: premeditation, like salvation, can come in a flash), because Oswald's transfer from police building to county jail had been advertised for ten o'clock and Ruby didn't even show up until 11:20, just as Oswald emerged. Three minutes before, and the time could be proved, Ruby had been in a Western Union office across the street, wiring $25 to a stripper who needed to be paid for the weekend she wouldn't be working.

Ruby himself, Howard would have presented as "an excitable, impulsive, even violent show-off who nonetheless was generous, decent and honest." Howard could probably have put on the record (certainly if Ruby himself took the stand) a nice, useful story about Ruby's reaction to the murder of a Dallas detective whom he had barely known. He had cried, closed his club, taken his girls to the funeral, and donated $200 to the widow. This murder case is still listed as unsolved. The police (and Ruby was friendly with lots of policemen) were sure they knew

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who did it, but they could never gather enough evidence to prosecute. Coupled with the nationwide disorientation of that dreadful weekend, and Ruby's demonstrably unstable personality, the story would have given the jurors a good sentimental reason to deal easily with the man who assassinated the President's assassin. And once a jury gets in the room, every lawyer believes (nobody really knows), sentiment weighs more heavily than law.

But Ruby's brother and sisters decided Tom Howard was too small a figure to stand at the center of such an important case, and began their long fluttering about the legal lights first of Dallas and then of the nation at large. To Ruby's misfortune, they came up with the San Francisco-*cum*-Hollywood negligence lawyer Melvin Belli, who had grown rich on his one-third share of enormous verdicts for personal injuries to his clients, and famous through talking about how he had gotten rich. For Belli, a light sentence was not a good enough result from the Ruby trial: *he* could get Ruby off completely. As eighty million people had seen the killing, it might be difficult to find Ruby a convincing alibi; the only possible grounds for acquittal were insanity. Therefore, Ruby was insane. Belli proposed an insanity defense to Ruby's brother before he had ever met Ruby, gathered any evidence that could be used in a court, or discussed the question with a psychiatrist.

As Kaplan and Waltz see the case, Ruby was probably sane at the time of the Oswald murder by any sensible definition of sanity—and certainly sane by the legal definition, which is, in Texas as in most states, that he knew what he was doing and was capable of knowing that it was wrong. (The authors do not come out flatly with this opinion—the matter is still potentially *sub judice*, and they are, after all, law professors—but the conclusion is patent in most of what they write, especially in what they write about Belli.) They regard as particularly weak Belli's special version of the insanity defense—that Ruby killed Oswald while behaving as an automaton in a fugue state occasioned by a seizure of psychomotor epilepsy. Ruby had no history of seizures as such (though he could be shown to have a short fuse), and the only evidence to make the story remotely plausible was a slight variation from the normal in his electroencephelograph charts—a variation that could be, and was, differently interpreted by different specialists. This evidence probably could not have been made to stand up even in states where the law places on the prosecution the burden of proof that the defendant was *not* insane at the time of the crime; in states like Texas (and countries like England), where the insanity itself must be proved, the EEG charts were ridiculously inadequate. Though Belli later wrote that his case "had been proved to perfection," Kaplan and Waltz say it "had collapsed." They do not really believe that it had ever existed.

THE AUTHORS are prepared to accept the notion that Belli might have had a chance with a more conventional psychiatric defense, because Jack Ruby was certainly "a bit of a nut." Indeed, the testimony for such a defense was entered in evidence, though Belli, dazzled by the brilliance of his original line, refused to emphasize it. Meanwhile, Kaplan and Waltz point out, the defense itself had been a punishment far beyond anything a jury was likely to do to Ruby after hearing the arguments Tom Howard wished to employ. "Jack Ruby, before a crowded courtroom and the press of the world," Kaplan and Waltz write, "was stripped of both his self-respect and his illusions. He heard himself analyzed by his psychiatrists as a latent homosexual with a compulsive desire to be liked and respected, described by his own lawyer as the village clown. . . . As one of the newsmen, Edward Linn, put it, 'It would have been kinder to stone him to death.'" Whatever Ruby's mental condition when he killed Oswald, he had a certifiable suicidal paranoia by the end of his trial. He believed his brother had been tortured, castrated, and burned to death in the street outside his cell, and that all the Jews in America were being slaughtered in a huge pogrom because the Kennedy assassination

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was now being blamed on him.

Most of the book is the trial itself. The horror story is told well and rather economically, though *The Trial of Jack Ruby* is distinguished by the quality of its authors' minds rather than by the quality of their prose. They lapse occasionally into journalese ("newsman," "the famed Menninger Clinic," etc.), but only rarely into professional jargon. Their explanations of Texas law are lucid. One could wish they had allowed themselves more space for some of the more general questions that arise, particularly for the legal and philosophical conundrums that festoon the insanity defense in criminal prosecutions. Like everyone else, Kaplan and Waltz detest the M'-Naghten Rules, with their contentless categories of right and wrong. Like most liberals, they feel a continuing *Angst* toward the deceptive simplicities of Judge Bazelon's 1954 decision in *Durham*, excluding from criminal culpability anyone whose "unlawful act was the product of a mental disease or mental defect." And like all law professors, they regret that "most Americans . . . are still highly suspicious of the insanity defense." What their seven-page discussion really says, though, is that the problem is unmanageable—which is what most American lawyers believe.

This non-lawyer cannot avoid the feeling that the law and its servants have taken an admittedly difficult question and made it impossible through the choice of a faulty frame of reference. Much of the problem lies with the verbal form itself: "not guilty by reason of insanity." Belli looked silly in Dallas when he tried to bar from the jury anyone who had seen the television pictures of the Oswald murder, because he was willing to agree that Ruby had done it. But in a sense he was right: the law was asking too much of common-sense jurors when it told them they must give to someone like Ruby, whom they had *seen* commit a murder, the same formal "not guilty" they would give to some poor devil who could show he had been a hundred miles away from the scene of the crime with which he was charged, and stood in the dock only because of the overzeal-

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ous credulity and stupidity of police or prosecutor.

IN OTHER SECTIONS of their book, Kaplan and Waltz make reference to British practice, and it is a pity that they do not do so here. For the formal British verdict of "guilty but insane" opens a path to a much more sensible disposition of insanity pleas. In its paper before the Royal Commission investigating these matters in 1949, the British Medical Association urged (unsuccessfully) the opening up of this plea to allow a verdict of "guilty but with diminished responsibility." The "murder without malice" verdict that Kaplan and Waltz would have considered proper in the Ruby case really means "guilty but with diminished responsibility," and these words are much more significant to both psychiatrists and laymen—and maybe even to lawyers.

Real difficulties are not resolved by verbal tricks, but words can help in avoiding what the late Felix Cohen called "transcendental nonsense." The public should not be criticized for regarding guilt or innocence as objective facts: they *are* objective facts. And psychiatrists, whose basic discipline is determinist, ought not to be placed in a position where they must seek precise measurements of the degree to which a given action was inescapable for a given actor. Admitting the guilt of the insane criminal would also automatically shift the emphasis to the right question, which is the penalty or treatment that makes the most sense, giving due regard to the unique life in the dock and to the long-range interests of the society.

The utility of the Ruby episode, if it has any, lies in its unusual concentration of all the elements that make the present insanity plea (and, maybe, the dichotomy between first-degree and second-degree murder) unworkable in the courtroom. Kaplan and Waltz have performed a service by laying out the elements in good order, and one must always sympathize with those who decide not to open Pandora's box even though, as the mountain-climbers say, It Is There. But the service would have been greater, and the book would have been better, if the authors had been willing to apply their scholarship and intelligence to the vital issue as well as to the dead and stinking story.

SUBJECTIVE FAITH

REDISCOVERING JUDAISM: REFLECTIONS ON A NEW THEOLOGY. Edited by Arnold Jacob Wolf. *Quadrangle Books. 288 pp. $6.50.*

Reviewed by MARVIN FOX

NINE CONTEMPORARY Jewish thinkers are represented in this collection of essays—each seeking in his own way the meaning and relevance of some particular aspect of Judaism. Though the writers are of diverse religious backgrounds, and though they differ in the modes of their Jewish piety, they are united in a common search: they are committed to the Jewish tradition, but the fact of its being a tradition—handed down, that is, through the generations—is not sufficient in and of itself to enable them to make it their own. In the depths of their beings they are Jews, but they are at the same time educated and thoughtful men who accept the premises and conclusions of our humanistic-scientific culture. For such men, Judaism cannot be received simply as a gift from our ancestors, but must be won anew through personal search and struggle. Characterizing the contributors to this volume, the editor writes: "For us, Judaism is not so much a heritage as an achievement. Or, perhaps more accurately, to make it our heritage has become our decisive task."

In view of this orientation, it is not too surprising to find that few of the writers represented in *Rediscovering Judaism* are troubled by what others might regard as the most fundamental question of all—whether religious belief itself is still possible for contemporary man. Starting out as they do with a positive religious concern, and accepting Judaism as the framework within which that concern must be worked out, they are moved primarily to determine how to relate themselves to their Jewish heritage and how that heritage can become relevant for them as modern men; whether the heritage is itself viable does not, however, come into question. Most of these essays, then, will be of little help to the man who finds the very idea of religion anomalous; for him, the contributors to this volume both presume too much and offer too little. Yet there is no point in criticizing the book for not being a different one. Rather, we must examine how far these writers have achieved the goal they have set for themselves.

THE ESSAYS range in subject matter from such general questions as Lou H. Silberman's "The Task of Jewish Theology," or Jacob Petuchowski's "The Dialectics of Reason and Revelation," to such particular issues as "Psychoanalysis and the Temperaments of Man" by Arnold Jacob Wolf, or Stephen Schwarzschild's "A Jewish Perspective on International Relations." They range in quality from the pedestrian to the profound, with occasional regrettable lapses into the vernacular. Thus one wishes, for example, that Zalman M. Schacter, in his "Patterns of Good and Evil," had resisted the temptation to capture the reader with section headings like "My Son, the Catalyzing Fossil," "If Y're So Committed, How Come Y'aint God?," and "But Until You Get to the Inn You Still Need a Little Bit of Gin." These seem particularly out of place in a volume which also includes Emil L. Fackenheim's "The Revealed Morality of Judaism and Modern Thought," a model of sobriety and philosophic depth.

For the most part, the writers employ a dialectical scheme wherein they seek first to affirm, and then to overcome, the tensions between Judaism and modern thought. This comes out perhaps most clearly in the opening essay by Silberman in which he proposes "a program of study and work that can lead to a meaningful statement of Judaism, intellectually sound and spiritually relevant in and for the generation to which it is addressed." To confront the tradition, Silberman argues, one must first know it—in all its vast diversity and complexity. Hence, the "program" he urges is to consist of a careful and unbiased study of all

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the main sources of Judaism. Silberman is fierce in his opposition to those "liberal" Jewish thinkers who have dealt with the tradition in a capriciously selective manner, retaining what supports their particular attitudes and rejecting or ignoring the rest. In his view, no Jewish source may be excluded *a priori*, for we cannot know in advance what will speak to us and to our situation.

IN SILBERMAN'S version, the dialectical tension is between the tradition and the subjectivity of the individual who confronts it. Because he cannot merely accept and appropriate the Jewish tradition as given, the contemporary Jewish thinker "must acquire the capacity for affirming and must affirm what he has the capacity to affirm." Yet even while attempting to accept the fullest possible version of Judaism, the modern Jew can commit himself only to those elements which evoke a personal, authentic response in him, persuading his mind and engaging his total being. A response of this kind cannot—almost by definition—be prescribed, and Silberman offers us no sure guide to it, and so we are left with the reminder that though his inclination will always be in favor of the tradition, the contemporary Jew—notwithstanding Silberman's own injunction to "affirm"—can only affirm what is possible for him in his existential individuality.

A similar view is presented in Jakob Petuchowski's essay exploring the relations between reason and revelation. In reiterating the familiar history of the problem, he shows that we have moved far from classical Judaism in which "the role assigned to Reason was wholly *within* the framework of revealed religion," so that today we stand at the opposite pole where reason dominates all, leaving no room for revelation. The problem, then, is to recapture revelation and restore it to its proper place, and this requires, according to Petuchowski, an existential gesture. As man affirms his own individuality he discovers the insufficiency of reason, for no set of rational categories is sufficient to cope with the trans-rational mystery of human personality—of what it means to be a man. In the same way, religious experience, too, transcends rational limits. God is revealed to us in prayer, and His covenant with Israel is revealed whenever we take our stand as Jews in the stream of Jewish history. But since personal responses cannot be programmed, what, precisely, is that stand to consist of? Herein lies the danger in the personal, relativistic approach of much of this book.

Though none of the writers included in it would go so far as to substitute for normative Judaism a pure subjectivity, they occasionally come very close to doing so. Granted that their subjectivity is conditioned by, and responds to, the tradition, yet in the course of this same process the tradition is being refracted through, and hence considerably transformed by, their individual responses. And though this dilemma is not a new one—one could even say that it is the perennial dilemma of any living religion—yet the essays in this volume reveal a radical departure on the part of our contemporary Jewish thinkers from the way it has been dealt with in the past. The classical Jewish response to the tradition has always been made not only in terms of ideas, attitudes, and beliefs, but also, and above all, in terms of specific patterns of piety—that is, of conformity in practice to the *Halakhah*. This conformity has served throughout our history as an anchor, safeguarding the tradition from the dangers of subversion by excessive subjectivity. In other words, so long as the relatively stable norms of the law have regulated the quality and character of the Jewish community, a wide variety of individual responses to theological questions could be permitted, with no danger to the tradition itself.

AS A PARADIGM for this situation we can look as far back as the 13th century when the sage Nachmanides attacked the doctrines of Maimonides without restraint—going so far as to assert, for example, concerning certain aspects of Maimonides' theory of prophecy, that "these teachings directly contradict Scripture; it is forbidden to hear them and certainly

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forbidden to believe in them."

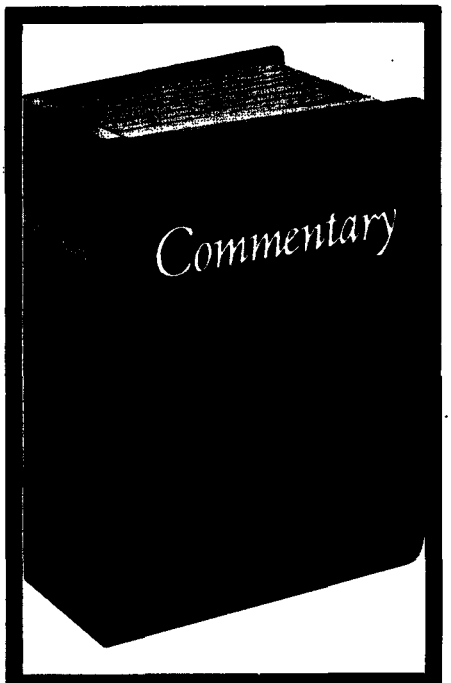
Could one not therefore maintain that these great sages not only differed in their understanding of the tradition, but that their differences stemmed, in fact, from their subjective responses, since they quite clearly inhabited different intellectual worlds, were moved by different inner needs, and hence viewed the traditional teaching from their own peculiar perspectives? And if so, what, then, held them together within the common Jewish tradition? Most certainly, it was the fact that in *halakhic* matters they no longer responded with this same subjectivity. Though there can be differences of opinion in matters of Jewish law no less than in other matters, as we well know, yet there do exist in this area recognized methods for resolving such differences, or, at least, for reaching decisions about them, one way or another. The very same people who are at swords'-point on theological questions live out their lives in accordance with identical legal norms—which is why in the legal literature we are not surprised, for example, to find the mystic Joseph Karo defending (in his *Kesef Mishneh*) the code of the rationalist Maimonides against attacks from various quarters. These men and others like them, who might never have been able to share a common set of theological interpretations of reality, did possess a common law.

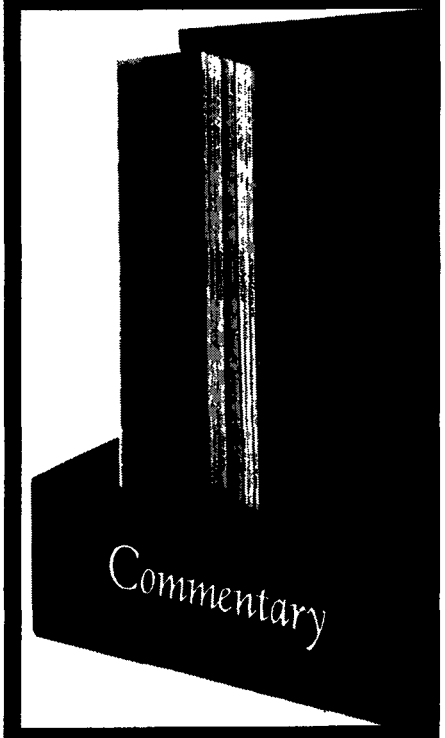
IT IS THE attempt to find normative Judaism without such a law that ultimately makes the contributors to the present volume prisoners of their own subjectivity. All of them seem to affirm the traditional doctrines of God as Creator, of His presence in history, of His covenant with the people of Israel, and His redemptive power. But these doctrines are open to so wide a variety of interpretations that a normative Judaism cannot be constructed out of them alone. The subjectivity of the individual writers dominates, even as they confront those teachings of the tradition which they all seem to hold in common. When we consider some of the essays dealing with particular problems of present-day Judaism rather than with the more general theological questions, this becomes even more readily apparent.

Steven Schwarzschild, for example, calls his essay "A Jewish Perspective on International Relations," but the reader is hard pressed to find anything specifically Jewish in his approach to the subject, though he does make certain basic distinctions which are illuminating. In brief, Schwarzschild's argument is that Christianity, in its advocacy of a dualism between body and spirit, abdicated concern with this world. Seeking the Kingdom of God in another world, Christianity could leave the state to Caesar and, as a result, Christian culture sets no moral norms for the state as a corporate entity, allowing it to be controlled exclusively by the claims of self-interest. Judaism, on the other hand, *is* concerned with this world. It views all principalities and powers as bound by the law, as is shown by the extensive legislation to be found in the Bible, the Talmud, and the Codes, prescribing norms of conduct for kings and governments, no less than for individuals.

Thus far, Schwarzschild's explication is cogent enough, but at this point—where we would reasonably expect him to show us what specifically the directives of Jewish law are with respect to contemporary international problems—we are given not one word on the subject. Instead, Schwarzschild tells us at some length about himself and his own private views on various major issues of international politics. Speaking as "an unashamed and self-confessed pacifist, Jewish traditionalist, and theological messianist," he confesses, for example, that he opposed American intervention in the internal affairs of Guatemala, but favored our naval threats to Trujillo's Dominican Republic, the latter preference being grounded in the fact that "I thoroughly disliked Trujillo, whereas I had some sympathy with the revolutionary Guatemalan regime." One wonders at the confusion which could lead to presenting judgments of this kind under the title, "A Jewish Perspective. . . ."

Similarly subjective responses can





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be found in Maurice Friedman's "Christianity and the Contemporary Jew." Friedman's dilemma is not unfamiliar. He cannot ignore Christianity, for it is a present reality which demands his response, nor yet can he deal with it with any measure of detachment. At least in one respect, his response is a Jewish one—he refuses to grant to Christianity any claim that it represents final religious truth, "that Christ *is* the fullest conceivable revelation of God." But this is, after all, what could be called the minimally Jewish response; short of it, one would cease being a Jew altogether, and become a Christian.

Having, then, made this minimally Jewish response, Friedman more or less lets it go at that, so far as the Jewish tradition is concerned, and proceeds to expatiate on the subject of his own personal spiritual dilemmas. Among them is the desire to maintain some living relationship with Christianity and with the Christ who is a "stumbling-block to Jews," which impels him to reinterpret not only Judaism but Christianity as well. In this connection, he rejects the cross because it is a symbol of Jewish suffering caused by anti-Semitism—a good reason, perhaps, but by no means the central Jewish one; similarly, he disallows Christianity's own historic claims not because of the absence of scholarly evidence on the subject, but because they appear to be unacceptable to him personally. Thus, in spite of the normative Christian views on the subject, he is certain that Jesus did not think of himself as the Messiah, because, as he puts it, that is "unthinkable to me." He finds it equally unthinkable that Jesus had foreknowledge of the future significance of the cross, or that he founded his church upon the rock which was Peter. Here we have a kind of apotheosis of theological subjectivity, whereby an individual Jew, speaking out of the privacy of his own concerns, undertakes to reform classical Christianity in order to be better able to relate himself to it.

A MUCH-NEEDED contrast to the excessive subjectivity of most of these writers is the brilliant essay by Emil L. Fackenheim that I have already mentioned. Fackenheim examines the issues, rather than his own needs, and approaches them with the rigorous tools of the trained philosopher. Though rejecting all purely external interpretations of Judaism, Fackenheim insists nevertheless that no serious contemporary Jew can ignore the challenges of modern thought, the most serious of which is, according to him, that posed by the philosophy of Kant. If we view morality, with Kant, as autonomous, what happens to the status of the divine commandments? Or, as Fackenheim poses the question: "How can man appropriate a God-given law or commandment, accepting and performing it as though it were his own, while yet remaining, in the very act of appropriation, essentially and receptively related to its divine giver? How can man *'morally'* obey a law which yet is, and never ceases to be, *essentially revealed?*"

In formulating his answer, which deserves fuller treatment than is possible here, Fackenheim sees the law not as a barrier between God and man, but rather as a bridge which unites them. Morality does not consist, as Kant thought, of rules which are to be observed only because they are intrinsically valuable; nor is the moral relationship one that exists only between man and man. It exists also between man and God, so that every moral act is performed both for its own sake and at the same time for God's sake. Without the relationship to God, we can have no morality, for there would then be no ground on which we could ascribe intrinsic value to man. But if man is to be a moral agent, he cannot merely be a puppet subject to God's control. Autonomy and heteronomy thus come together in the Jewish view of morality. Man, who is commanded, acquires his freedom in the fact of being commanded. In deciding for God, he decides for his own intrinsic worth, as well as for that of every other man.

Thus does Professor Fackenheim take significant steps toward clarifying an aspect of Judaism in relation to modern thought. In the end, the rigor of his objective analysis moves us far more deeply (and personally) than the subjective responses of his colleagues. Of all of them, he seems to have contributed most to this common effort "to rediscover Judaism."

THE PATRICIAN

MORNING AND NOON. By DEAN ACHESON. *Houghton, Mifflin. 288 pp. $6.00.*

Reviewed by JOSEPH KRAFT

WHEN DR. New Deal gave way to Dr. Win the War in 1940, there took place beneath the surface of events a corresponding change in the governing coalition of the nation. The New Deal had joined leaders of immigrant, labor, and intellectual groups from the urban East with rural progressives from the South and West. The Western progressives, isolationists to the core, regarded foreign commitments as (largely fraudulent) devices for suffocating domestic reform. As the prospect of American entry into World War II loomed larger and larger, they tended to enter the opposition. But at the critical moment, the vacuum they left was filled by men of business and finance from Wall Street and State Street, Eastern Republicans in the main, conservative in domestic matters but passionate internationalists. There thus was formed the Establishment coalition of Big Government, Big Labor, and Big Business that has dominated American foreign policy for the past quarter-century.

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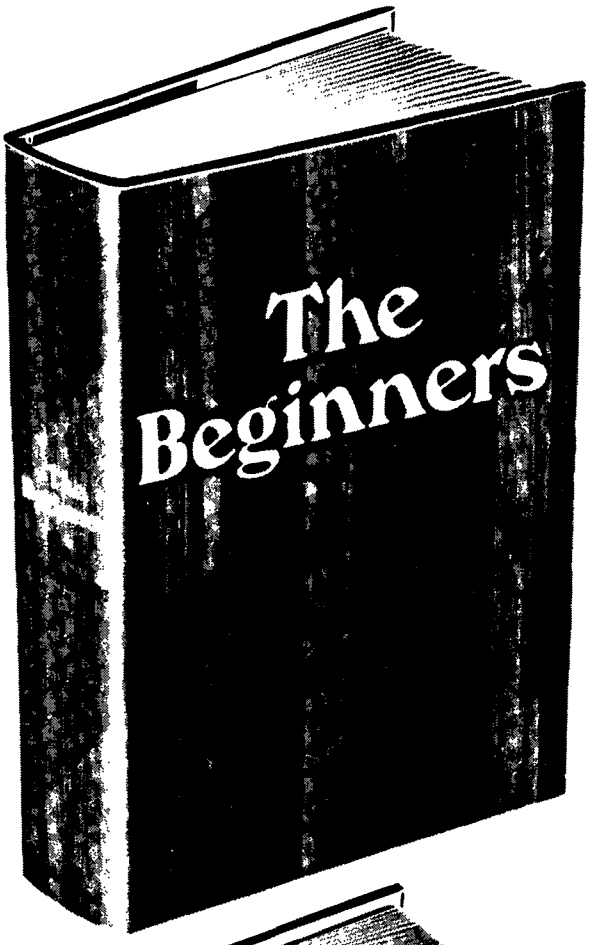

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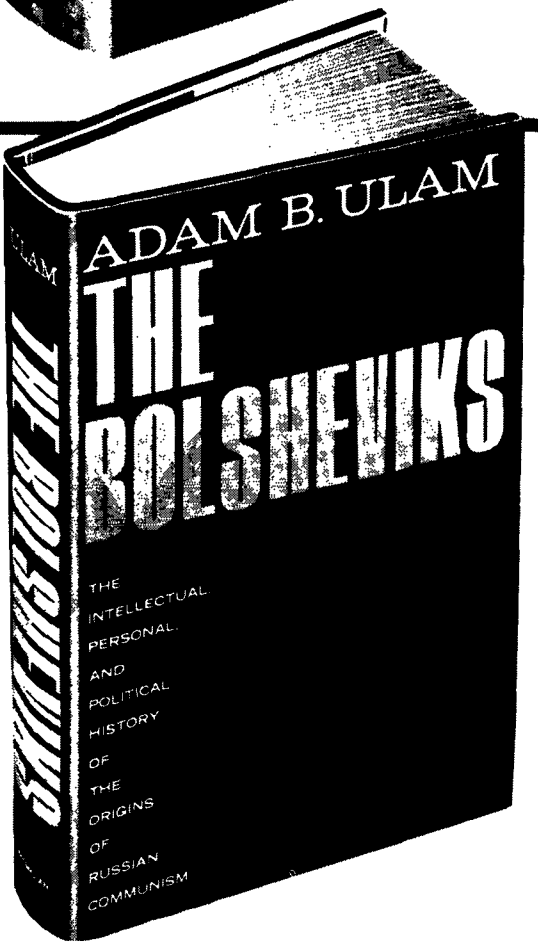

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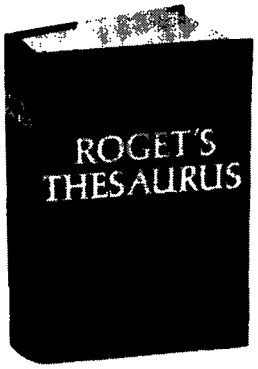

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practice of law in Washington, Dean G. Acheson. Together they developed and refined the formula for sending the ships abroad by Presidential order. Mr. Acheson then won public support for the opinion from two leading Wall Street lawyers, C. C. Burlingham and Thomas W. Thatcher. With that one stroke, Mr. Acheson emerged as a mover and shaker in the Establishment coalition. He set foot on the path that was to lead him, by a deep inner logic, to the position of Secretary of State during the years when the Establishment coalition and American power in the world found both their supreme test and the apex of their influence.

MR. ACHESON'S delightful memoir—the first volume of his autobiography—is a paradigm of his historic role. Nothing, it seems at first glance, could be further removed from the central development of American politics and power. The story ends just after the completion of the destroyer deal, with Mr. Acheson on the verge of entering the State Department as an Assistant Secretary. It omits many of what an outsider would presume to be the central facts of his early life. That Acheson *père* was an Episcopal bishop is nowhere stated. Groton, as if it were a dirty name, is not mentioned. There is not a word about undergraduate days at Yale. Experiences as a student at the Harvard Law School are passed over. So is courtship and marriage. Instead, the focus seems to rest on false starts, on things that never panned out. He tells of his boyhood in a small New England town; of working as a common laborer on the railroad that became the Canadian Pacific; of two years of dwelling, as law clerk to Justice Brandeis, among serious and liberal men in the time of postwar disillusion that yielded Harding and Coolidge; of private law practice in Washington; of a successful fight, during the hearing that confirmed Felix Frankfurter as a Supreme Court Justice, against the virus that later acquired currency as McCarthyism; of his resignation as Under Secretary of the Treasury after two years in office.

At first, one has the impression that Mr. Acheson is treating the past as if his "morning and noon" had never been followed by anything, let alone a glorious afternoon. But a closer look shows the case going the other way altogether. There is, for example, the dedication, to Frankfurter with a text from Amos: "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" A felicitous motto, it suggests the coming together of two wholly different men, a meeting of alien worlds. And once this clue is seized, it becomes clear that Mr. Acheson is describing precisely the traits and circumstances that enabled him to be a hinge in history, that placed him between two worlds, at the relay point where destiny changed horses.

When it comes to traits, ripeness, if not all, is a great deal. To know Mr. Acheson even a little bit—to be in the presence of that imperious look, that brisk stride, that relish for words, particularly his own—is to see personified the taste for life and its endless variety. "If Aristotle," he remarked casually the other day, "had been assigned to train Felix Frankfurter as the perfect Supreme Court Justice, he would have botched the job. But life took over, and did it perfectly."

The pattern traced in the memoir avoids the familiar, the so-to-speak Aristotelian, stopping-places of school, college, marriage, etc., only to accentuate the perpetual freshness of life taking over in a series of novel experiences. "The Radiant Morn" is the title of the chapter on boyhood. It speaks of a life "wholly free . . . with the freedom of wild things." Working on the railroad "revived a sense of freedom amidst uncoerced order . . . a priceless possession, joy in life." Working with Brandeis left "the memory of . . . a voice always saying . . . 'Lift up your hearts.'" In private practice at the firm of Covington and Burling, "I found myself more completely on my own than I had been with Justice Brandeis." Years as a Washington lawyer fostered the capacity "to understand at once the uniqueness of unprecedented situations and immediately to set about devising new and practical ways of dealing with them." Even the sad, short time at the Treasury is set down to "an ambition for adventure" that lasted "well into middle

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life." And with the decision to enter the State Department, life once again takes over. Of the consultations with his wife and partners that led to that decision, Mr. Acheson writes: "How futile these exercises in thought and consultation are! Mere rationalization of decisions already made. Forces stronger than reason determined the result . . . the world was moving . . . sweeping me with it. I was too conscious of this, too restless even to want to escape the current."

To live in Washington and maintain an ambition for adventure in the 1920's was to be involved with causes as much as with cases. Mr. Acheson was closely connected with people who fought for the League of Nations, for the rights of labor, and for the civil liberties threatened by the "hysteria which swept the country in 1919 and 1920." He came to know not only Brandeis, but Samuel Gompers, the La Follettes, Stuart Chase, and Sinclair Lewis. On Inaugural Day 1921, he watched as Woodrow Wilson entered retirement in the house on S Street, and he was there watching again at Wilson's funeral. Once he imagined that he might work for a lawyer who "was at the time counsel for District 12 of the United Mine Workers"—John L. Lewis.

But plainly his heart was not in the reforming business. Looking back now, he has his doubts about even the League of Nations: "It is hard to believe that our membership would have altered the trends which were developing in America, Europe and Asia, that those in authority would have understood any better what was occurring in the world around them and acted any differently than they did." By the early 1930's he had explicitly broken with radical innovation—one of the reasons that led to the fight over devaluation of gold which ended in his forced resignation as Under Secretary of the Treasury.

Even at the time, sitting at the feet of Brandeis, he was not really comfortable with the liberal position; and nothing shows this better than a brilliant sketch of Brandeis that he sent to Frankfurter in 1920. He passed over the passionate Zionist. He passed over the moralist "appalled" (in Alexander Bickel's words) "by helplessness, dependence, irresponsibility." He passed over the great defender of the laboring man who in a case on the rights of seamen (again in Bickel's words) "started writing before he had the citations." He did not see that individualism and skepticism were mainly useful tools in the fight against the defenses of privilege as they then existed. On the contrary, Mr. Acheson took these for absolute values. He wrote of the Justice:

> He isn't more than wistfully moved by the possibility of applying intelligence to life on a large scale because he knows there isn't that much intelligence to apply. Instead—as I see him—he thinks that the great end in life lies with the individual mind, in building up its own worlds, in its explanations and darings and triumphs over weaknesses and fears and laziness, and perhaps something more—but that I don't guess at. But he sees that for the most the road to this is quite shut off and for the rest it is getting more and more impossible as great stupid institutions, growing larger and larger, fall across the way, and crowd into the little space which the individual has.

What Acheson saw in Brandeis was a strain that never disappeared from his own make-up. More conspicuously than any other public man of the postwar era, perhaps, Acheson has been a gentleman of the old school. And while it is nowhere explicitly mentioned, the influence of the old school, the part of tradition in his life, shines through the Acheson memoir. Fiorello LaGuardia spoke for most Americans when he declared: "I have no family tree." But in Acheson's case, the family line was strong and identifiable—prosperous Scotch-English and Anglo-Irish merchants and soldiers who emigrated to Canada and prospered more. At his boyhood home in Connecticut, the Union Jack was flown on the Queen's birthday, and the Queen was toasted in claret. The family creed was in keeping with its pedigree. Of his father Mr. Acheson writes:

> As a prelate he was a baffling man, widely read in theology and Christian doctrine, yet rarely

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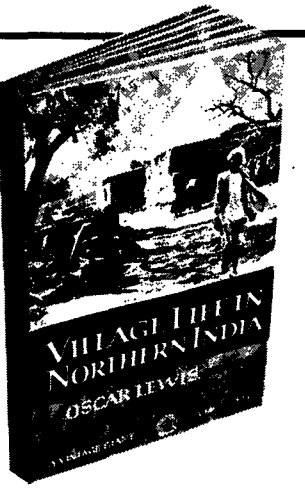

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speaking of either, privately or in his sermons, which so far as I can remember dealt more with ethics and conduct. But no conviction could have been deeper than his in a code of conduct, based on perceptions of what was decent and civilized for man inextricably caught up in social relationships. If his goal was the salvation of his soul, it was a salvation by works performed with charity and humor as well as zeal. Through this mixture of belief ran a strong strain of stoicism. Much in life could not be affected or mitigated, and, hence, must be borne. Borne without complaint, because complaints were a bore and nuisance to others and undermined the serenity essential to endurance.

Civilized behavior marked by stoicism and humor—the earmarks of the gentleman—remain the Acheson qualities par excellence. Very few men have been subjected to the public sandbagging that was reserved for Acheson during the last years of the Truman administration. But except for a gratuitous shot at Walter Lippmann, the memoir does not look back in anger. On the contrary, what must have been difficult times in life, notably at Groton, are delicately suppressed. Even from the most painful experience recounted in the memoirs—the resignation as Under Secretary of the Treasury—Mr. Acheson draws a comfort that expresses both stoicism and the traditional set of values. He recounts that years later, when some official was making heavy weather about a letter of resignation, Roosevelt handed the draft back to Steve Early and said: "Return it to him and tell him to ask Dean Acheson how a gentleman resigns." The same sense of traditionalism—of the gentleman triumphing over the ruder species—runs through the exultant account of Frankfurter's confirmation hearings, and of the baffling of Senator Pat McCarran.

BUT THE SENSE of tradition, if it provided no small part of the "joy in life," seems also to have had a limiting role. Washington today is full of Achesonians, younger men who turn easily and confidently to the ex-Secretary for advice in the handling of private and public business. The memoir makes plain that Acheson, too, had his idols among older men. "From the first moment I saw Justice Holmes, I succumbed to hero worship," he writes. For Frankfurter, Brandeis, General George Marshall, and the senior partners in Covington and Burling, he had feelings only slightly less adoring. But not one of his own contemporaries is even much mentioned, let alone celebrated. It is as if Mr. Acheson was never comfortable with the men of his own generation, but only in the kind of relationships where he could play disciple to mentors or mentor to disciples.

Ultimately the sense of tradition was to find expression in the most prominent features of the Acheson foreign policy. The emphasis on Europe over the underdeveloped countries and on military and economic power as a means of building resistance to hostile forces, have been, since the beginning, commonplaces of the Establishment coalition. The delicate reticence that is so much a part of the gentleman's style, and that is so much a mark of the memoir, explains to no small degree the merciless sandbagging. How could a Joe McCarthy, faced with such reticence about what was most obvious, not suspect that there was some trickery afoot, even a conspiracy against his kind?

But at all times, unlike his successors, Acheson displayed the quality he attributed to lawyers of his own stripe—the ability "to understand at once the uniqueness of unprecedented situations and immediately to set about devising new and practical ways of dealing with them." There lay his greatness. He played probably the leading role in the development of the Greek-Turkish aid program, of the Marshall Plan, of NATO, of the concept of an Atlantic Community linked to a unified Europe that would anchor and tame the Germans, and in the resistance against aggression in Korea through the machinery of the United Nations. By no mere accident, the Acheson era was the creative heyday of American foreign policy.

THE ACHESON era is now passed. So is the Acheson style. Foreign policy has been professionalized. It is a

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job for those who grind at it night and day over the years, not for brilliant amateurs. Hardly anyone now concerned with its closest workings in Washington has had the opportunity to develop the wit, the language, the originality and flair that marked Mr. Acheson's approach. Fittingly, at the end Mr. Acheson writes: "Clotho found new yarns of life to spin, and Lachesis, She of the Lot, drew her chances from greater odds. Only Atropos hung back and, happily withheld her shears, as the thread lengthened."

THE COFO EXPERIENCE

FREEDOM SUMMER. BY SALLY BELFRAGE. *Viking. 288 pp. $5.00.* LETTERS FROM MISSISSIPPI. By ELIZABETH SUTHERLAND. *McGraw-Hill. 234 pp. $4.95.*

Reviewed by
BELL GALE CHEVIGNY

IN *Freedom Summer,* Sally Belfrage tells of being put in jail with a number of other white Northern girls after a demonstration in Greenwood, Mississippi. "We began to examine our new home. Margaret got up and paced the cell. 'This is for my diary,' she said. 'Fifteen . . . by ten.'" Margaret's behavior seems to have been typical of the 650 young volunteer workers who went South during the summer of 1964. Continually shocked and stirred by what they saw, they greeted their experience, even their disasters, in the spirit of a zealous historian. At the same time, they used their letters home to contribute faithfully and vigorously to the nation's education about itself—one of the main purposes and important achievements of that extraordinary episode in the civil-rights movement known as the COFO Mississippi Project.

Two books have grown from the accumulation of such inside data as the measurement of cells. One is *Letters from Mississippi,* the correspondence of the volunteers, edited by Elizabeth Sutherland; the other, Miss Belfrage's sustained account of her experience from the orientation meetings at Oxford, Ohio, through her two-month stay in Greenwood, Mississippi, to the climactic struggle at the National Democratic Convention in Atlantic City. The interest of both books is that they are the first amid all the accounts of that historic summer to be written by those who helped shape it rather than by professional observers. Moreover, they provide first-hand material for understanding, or at least speculating about, a generation whose concern for politics and direct action produced the Mississippi Project as its most massive and original gesture.

AT FIRST glance Miss Belfrage's book seems the more promising because she is an experienced writer as well as a dedicated participant. On the basis of her well-received *A Room in Moscow,* which also dealt with the subject of living in an alien culture, one looks for apt characterization of place and people, a certain amount of relevant self-examination, and perhaps a more searching look than usual at the movement in which she shared. The descriptive writing in *Freedom Summer* measures up to the first of these expectations. Miss Belfrage skillfully evokes the rank, down-at-heel Mississippi setting, as well as the qualities of the Negroes she went to work for, teach, and live with. She also weaves in the odd combination of emotions characteristic of the volunteers who began to feel at home only away from whites and among blacks. Her account is perhaps strongest near the end of the summer when we are made to feel the movement's peculiar atmosphere of cumulative tension—the interlocked anxiety, chaos, and weariness: "Having to get up around dawn, sensibly you'd go to bed when they do, at ten or earlier. But there's a strange mechanism at work on us at night preventing it—when the children are gone, the chicken eaten, the mass meeting over, then there are still all of us left to egg each other on, everyone full and fed up with it but somehow longing for the next disaster. Then suddenly there is news of an arrest, someone has been beaten up, and the competition starts to see who can go down to the jail, who can get beaten up too, who can pick up the next phone call from the bomb crank: something, anything, to *do.*"

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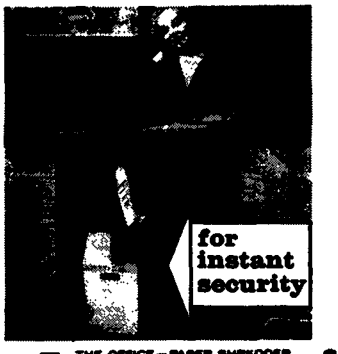

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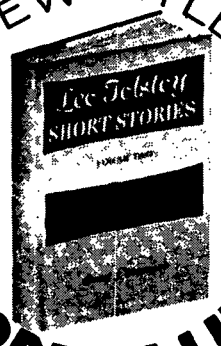

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MISS BELFRAGE'S examination of her experience and her interpretation of the movement, however, are disappointing. The sense of self, of personal motives and inner change, is almost entirely absent. There is a three-page excursion on interracial hate, guilt, and expiation, but it appears to be an obligatory gesture, attached in no way to the rest of the book. It is also oddly detached (she "tries"—that is, experiments with—the theories of Baldwin and others about white guilt) and confused. In her conclusion she simultaneously joins and shucks off the issue: "the hate is there. If it's not mine, then whose? To act at all, perhaps one has to assume the sins which led to the need to act, whether or not they fit, make them one's own. To take on the deep hates with the deep loves, exist inside them, and somehow find a way out."

THE absence of a developing, reflective personality is the more regrettable because Miss Belfrage rarely ranges beyond what she experienced directly. And her telegraphic coverage of what passed before her eyes, her apparent lack of research or even adequate inquiry about the movement make much of the book superficial, thin, unduly spun out. Perhaps these weaknesses are the evidence of haste (occasional lapses in style bear this out), but they also indicate creative and analytical passivity. Questions are raised only to be dropped. "One of the puzzles of the movement was the way it seemed to attract more women than men," Miss Belfrage writes, but she fails to pursue this significant observation. She expresses concern for the fate of the project after the exodus of the volunteers without speculating about it. And she introduces important and intriguing leaders of the movement in Ohio and Greenwood, without sufficiently identifying them in terms of background, character, and philosophy.

These objections tell most strongly against the first half of the book, where Miss Belfrage's resources are too scanty to crack open the mysterious mask of the South. But in the second half of the book, when she tells Greenwood's special story of crisis, even the surface of events is so revealing that the reader is well served. Indeed, the crisis in Greenwood can serve as a paradigm of one of the civil-rights movement's major internal conflicts.

BRIEFLY, it started when three local leaders, the McGhee brothers, tried to implement the new Civil Rights Act by integrating a Greenwood movie-house. Legendary for their courage, the McGhee brothers and their followers nightly confronted dangerous mobs. The COFO leaders consequently were faced with a dilemma. Because they were convinced that social change was more important than integration, that power was more essential than middle-class acceptance, and because they felt that integration was a more explosive issue, the veterans in COFO had adopted the policy of registering voters and building the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party rather than of testing the Act. More radical in theory, the position was too abstract for the local teenagers. Their imaginations were fired by the McGhees, who were committed to direct action and not to nonviolence. So they formed an organization of their own called "The Peacemakers" and made Silas McGhee president. As Miss Belfrage might have observed, the new group was at odds with the guiding ideas of the movement at that time—their emphasis on integration produced a strategy that COFO had moved beyond; their uncritical attitude toward violent means was related to a nationalist sentiment which the movement remained unwilling to move toward.

The man who cut the knot was Jesse Harrison. (One wishes to know more about him than that he was in his late twenties and a SNCC leader from Atlanta.) He presented the Peacemakers with the least violent outlet for their energies: the boycotting of a grocery in a Negro neighborhood owned by a policeman notoriously hard on demonstrators. It worked. Later came a greater crisis, the shooting of Silas McGhee; this time Harrison channeled the rage of the hastily-armed Negro community

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into a patrolling system, a rally, a march. The episode reveals the genius of some SNCC workers for understanding and directing a community; it should dispel, if anything can, some of the current images promulgated by the press of SNCC irresponsibility, wildness, and love of headline-making violence.

Letters from Mississippi also contains an account of the Greenwood crisis. But otherwise, the two books are complementary rather than repetitious. *Letters from Mississippi* makes up for what it lacks in continuous narrative drive and the evocation of a particular town by offering a comprehensive coverage of the COFO project. Elizabeth Sutherland has excellently edited the collection, providing succinct and informative introductions and links, which give it a perspective as well as an immediacy not usually available in material about the project.

The letters themselves inevitably lack the fluency of most of *Freedom Summer,* but they have their own rough appeal. They express the urgency of young people in a nearly perpetual state of discovery —of self, of country, of human nature. Some of their reactions are predictably banal ("the other America is opening itself before my naive, middle-class eyes"), but many of the letters bear the marks of reflection and skepticism. When they write about their motives, their work in the South often figures as an act of self-definition, or personal emancipation. One volunteer writes, "I sense somehow that I am at a crucial moment in my life and that to return home where everything is secure and made for me would be to choose a kind of death. . . . I feel the urgent need, somehow, to enter life, to be born into it." Elsewhere we read that certain Negroes were sensitive to such motives: "Some of the proud Negroes among us say we are trying to save the black man's body and the white man's soul." In general, the hospitality of Southern Negroes was overwhelming, but some of the volunteers detected in it a deep strand of traditional deference toward whites: " 'How you all? . . . Jes' fine, thanky, jes' fine!' Always an artificial, pious enthusiasm, until it seems a ventriloquist's trick. And I always find it a parody of the behavior that white supremacy has enforced on the Negro." Such passages of discernment leaven the emotional exaltation of much of *Letters from Mississippi,* and give the collection as a whole balance and dignity.

The actual achievements of the summer are more amply projected than in *Freedom Summer.* Miss Sutherland has a command of the differing conditions of towns which made registration or Freedom Schools work in one area, not in another. All aspects of political activity are documented in rich personal anecdote. There is also the less familiar material on the project's attempts to reach the white community and on the Freedom Schools, where foreign languages were popular because Negro schools omitted them, and where government classes began by distinguishing the words "mayor" and "mare." And the letters in which some of the volunteers explain their decisions to stay on after the summer testify that the achievements were mutual.

THE ULTIMATE limitation of both books is something that cannot properly be criticized because it is bound up with the achievement that is described in them. Because the visit of white volunteers, which white Southerners with some justice called an "invasion," was only for six to eight weeks by and large, books about that period alone have an anomalous quality. Read only a year later, they seem disproportionately dated, lost in time because they are not rooted in history. Written by people who in many cases had barely cut their way through the accents of their hosts by the time they left them, there is also a sense of unreality about the rapport struck between Northern white and Southern Negro which increases after the books are closed. The anomaly of the Mississippi project itself was perhaps an inspiration, but it remains a curious interlude in the lives of Mississippi Negroes and an elusive event in the development of the movement. These books are welcome, but they also suggest the need for more au-

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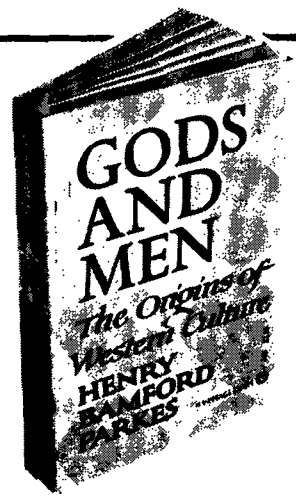

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thoritative accounts, both historical and personal, if we are to understand the continuing and complex revolution, only a moment of which they record.

ABSTRACTED PAINTERS

THE VANGUARD ARTIST: PORTRAIT AND SELF-PORTRAIT. By BERNARD ROSENBERG AND NORRIS FLIEGEL. *Quadrangle Books. 366 pp. $7.50.*

Reviewed by GEORGE DENNISON

THE ANNOUNCED PURPOSE of the authors is to draw a "composite portrait" of "the artist." Their material is taken chiefly from taped interviews with twenty-nine New York artists, many of whom figured in the revolutionary developments of the late 40's. This was an exciting and heavily-burdened period, and with regard to painting it was an absolute high-mark in the history of this country. There is very little in *The Vanguard Artist,* however, which indicates any interest in the period, the art, or the experiences of the vanguard. We are given a survey of recent art styles, but it is shallow and misleading, and the final portrait of the artist is little more than a compendium of sociological, psychological, educational, generational, and sexual "determinants." These lineaments are so vague that there is no need to suppose that our "composite" is an artist at all. The traits which have been abstracted can be found in energetic doctors, lawyers, salesmen, and almost all the baserunners of the Little League.

THE AUTHORS' determinants include such factors as parental attitudes, the degree of culture in the home, the early discovery of talent, and so on. These subjects were broached in conversation and the artists' replies were recorded on tape. The book consists, then, of quotations from the conversations and of conclusions drawn by the authors, who develop guidelines from various studies of creativity: Freud's, Phyllis Greenacre's, Kurt Eissler's, Gardner Murphy's, and H. Witkin's. A fair sampling of the results can be seen in the following excerpts, which were occasioned by questions on parental attitudes:

Testimony:

"Well, they never really heard of painting until I started to do it. They were very good about things like that. I went to Europe when I was very young."

"Well, my folks hated it so much that I figured it must be a good thing. . . ."

"They kept saying, 'It's nice for a hobby. . . .' "

"They were very proud of the fact that I was an artist. They happened to be very sympathetic. . . ."

Conclusion:

". . . the emerging artist was driving toward a different life pattern because it had more meaning for him. It was less a disavowal of his previous condition, or that of his family, and more an affirmation that there was another way of life which held more promise. . . ."

Some other conclusions: ". . . no artist in our group remained indefinitely isolated from cultural experiences." "Most artists recognize formal art training as a valuable source of information and an aid for developing basic technical skills not easily acquired elsewhere." "As a rebellious child begins to appreciate his father only when he too becomes a father, so an artist of the middle generation may empathize with older artists only when he too is cast off by the young."

THE AUTHORS, the artists, the reader, and above all truth, are severely frustrated by the nature of this inquiry, and the reason is quite obvious: the motive force, the technique, the vocabulary—virtually the entire study—comes from that large, familiar, absolutely sterilized hamper of disengaged professionalism. The losses which result are of persons, works, culture, and history. The difference between true profession and mere professionalism can be seen in the way these losses come about. And since an important body of art and an important period are being milked at a great rate of all reality (other surveys are afoot) these losses might be worth mentioning.

Persons are lost because professionalism tends to regard its own expertise as a substitute for experience. This leads to the familiar combination of learned vocabulary and profound ignorance of what has actually transpired. The method, the spurious "objectivity" of the academician, is itself an example of this kind of distortion. In the present case the authors—one a sociologist and the other a psychotherapist and professor of education—conducted their interviews as a team. The artists were promised anonymity and the authors were careful not to obtrude their own personalities. But the fact remains that the authors themselves must be taken into account as being the chief instruments or tools of the investigation. Each artist found himself faced by two men with only a cursory interest in painting and apparently little direct knowledge of it, carrying a tape recorder and armed with a list of determinants. Not only the tone of the interview must have been affected by this, but also the kind and the quantity of information and the kind and the quality of emotional responses that were elicited. ("The artist's voice is seldom shrill, and we are taken by surprise when one does reach the higher decibels with strong and strident emotion." I read this sentence to a painter friend and he urged me to mention the night Jackson Pollock tore the door off the men's room at the Cedar Bar.)

The impersonal approach of our authors, then, is by no means scientific. It cannot be described as "objective." One need only imagine the same artist talking to a young and knowledgeable admirer, or to another artist capable of enlivening him or of calling his bluff, to see that persons cannot be regarded as sources of unvarying units of information. The lesson of modern physics is that evidence must be weighted according to the instruments employed. Gestalt psychology is especially relevant here inasmuch as it stresses the bearing of the total field upon behavior elicited by inquiry or experiment. Our authors, in a far different spirit, write as if only their questions were present and they themselves were not. To regard this as a "sampling" is to beg the question of what, precisely, is being sampled.

This is one of the ways, then, in

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which persons are lost. Culture and history vanish at the same time. Let me give an example of how this comes about.

The first chapter, one of the most informative in the book, is called "The New York School: Emergence and Triumph." As elsewhere, the information is assembled from the words of the artists. We learn about the presence in New York of important painters fleeing the war in Europe, about the WPA art projects, about the break with existing styles, about the influence of Surrealism and automatism. Yet the discussion remains lifeless and misleading, mere tatters of information, because the authors, at the mercy of their method, were unable to ask cultural or historical questions. To ask if there was a break with the past, or a break with Europe, is simply to gather a kind of textbook information; to ask why it was that French Existentialism seemed inadequate to American needs introduces the pressure of events and brings us to culture and history. There can be no doubt that the authors are aware of this difference, but it is equally clear that they were unable to act on it. To act on it would have carried them outside their fields, and evidently they chose to be faithful to their categories, though the professional's concern—as opposed to the concerns of professionalism—raises precisely the question of whether the categories are faithful to life. It seems likely that if better questions had been asked, a larger experience consulted, the artists would have recapitulated the real context of their work—the literary, political, and philosophical influences which shaped their own lives. Such an exchange would play hob with determinants, but it would begin to resemble the actual events of history. And at some point, inevitably, the artists would have referred the investigators to their paintings, as much as to say, "I have *performed* this part of history. There is no substitute for the performance. Go look at it." The complex dialogue of lives and times *is* the material of art, and there is no way to sample it except by going to it.

MINUS HISTORY, minus persons and works, it is unavoidable that the vanguard experience should strike our authors as a kind of success story—the emergence of the "New York School"—and that a good bit of this book should be concerned with the careerism of the art world. All that is passionate and forceful, all that belongs to the mind and the spirit and that distinguishes the world of art from the art world, is ignored. And therefore such formulations as the following are plentiful and express the authors' point of view: "There is a genuine afterglow, but the brief, bright golden moment has ended. . . ." The "golden moment," of course, was World War II and the years just after. The word "crisis" was in the mouths of theologians, philosophers, psychoanalysts, poets, and writers. So were "despair," "extreme situations," "nausea," "rage." The most familiar literary argument was that the mere sufferer could not be a tragic hero, and the idea of identity trauma had already been broached. Among the artists themselves, the "golden moment" was unusually rich in suicides, drunkenness, and anger, and one noticed among the very finest a passion to bring the life into the work and the work into the life. Nothing made less sense than art-as-a-career: much more was at stake. If one wants to know *what* was accomplished, these things must be taken into account. The mere fact of *accomplishment* tells us very little. To adhere to this very little, this "golden moment," as our authors have done, comes through in the end as a professionalistic presumption that artists are merely another class of professionals.

We have, then, the following abstractions, and they operate continuously throughout this book: creativity abstracted from the man, the man abstracted from his times, and the interviews abstracted from life. The artists' works are simply ignored. The residue can hardly be called "a portrait."

If such a method could be cured by prescription, the prescription might be found in these words of W. H. Auden's from *The Dyer's Hand*: ". . . the poet creates not necessarily according to a law of nature but voluntarily according to provocation." The thought is stated in another way by Erik Erikson in *Young Man Luther*: ". . . we clini-

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cians have learned in recent years that we cannot lift the case history out of history, even as we suspect that historians, when they try to separate the logic of the historic event from that of the life histories which intersect in it, leave a number of vital historical problems unattended."

THOSE who are interested in creativity and in the vanguard art of the 40's and early 50's can turn to a number of books written with different motives and organized on different principles than the present tape-recorded survey. Ethel Schwabacher's book on Gorky tells of the man and his art. Harold Rosenberg's three books are acutely conscious of the period, the relevant ideas, and the pressures of history, and to a lesser extent so is Clement Greenberg's *Art and Culture*. I myself am not a partisan of these writers, but my very dissatisfaction makes me aware of my respect. Their books are valuable, they represent knowledge and experience, and above all they are genuinely engaged with culture, works, and history, the very aspects of life with regard to which mere professionalism is hopelessly adrift. An excellent example of the difference between profession and professionalism can be seen in the finely documented study of Gorky by William Rubin (*Art International*, Feb. '63), which in its devotion to the unfolding of a style in a given context might be taken as a model for this kind of writing. Not one of these authors is interested in creativity as such, yet the nature of creativity can be glimpsed in their pages, and the reason is not hard to come by. They are concerned with deeds. Creativity has no other manifestation on this earth.

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

MARTIN MAYER *is currently finishing a book on law and lawyers which is to be published by Harper and Row. Among his other books are* The Schools *and* Madison Avenue, U.S.A. *His last previous article in* COMMENTARY *was "Schools, Slums and Montessori," which appeared in June 1964.*

MARVIN FOX, *a member of the philosophy department of Ohio State, frequently reviews books on Judaism in these pages. His comments on Israel Efros's* Ancient Jewish Philosophy *were published in the July 1965* COMMENTARY.

JOSEPH KRAFT'S *syndicated column appears in the* New York Post. *His essay, "J. Edgar Hoover—The Compleat Bureaucrat," was in our February 1965 issue.*

BELL GALE CHEVIGNY, *a new contributor, teaches in the English department of Queens College.*

GEORGE DENNISON *has written criticism for* Arts Magazine *and* Kenyon Review. *He reviewed Claude Brown's* Manchild in the Promised Land *in our last number.*

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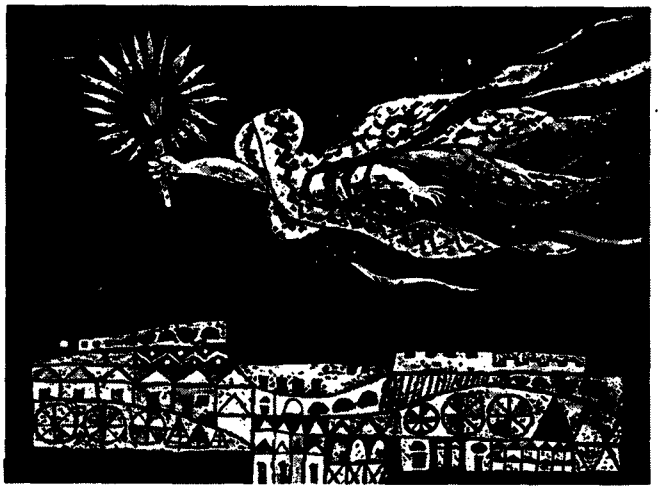

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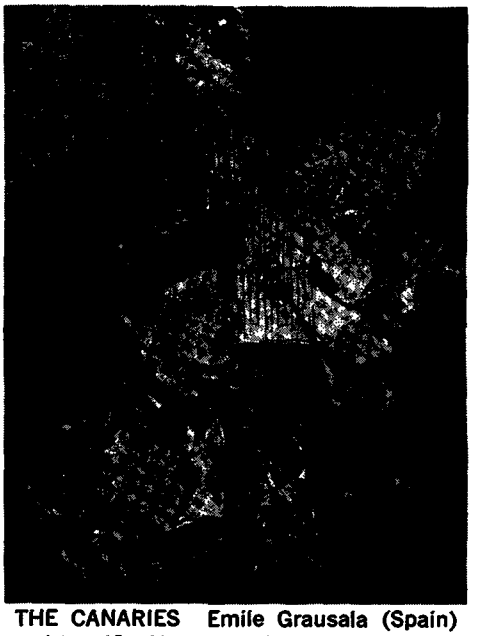

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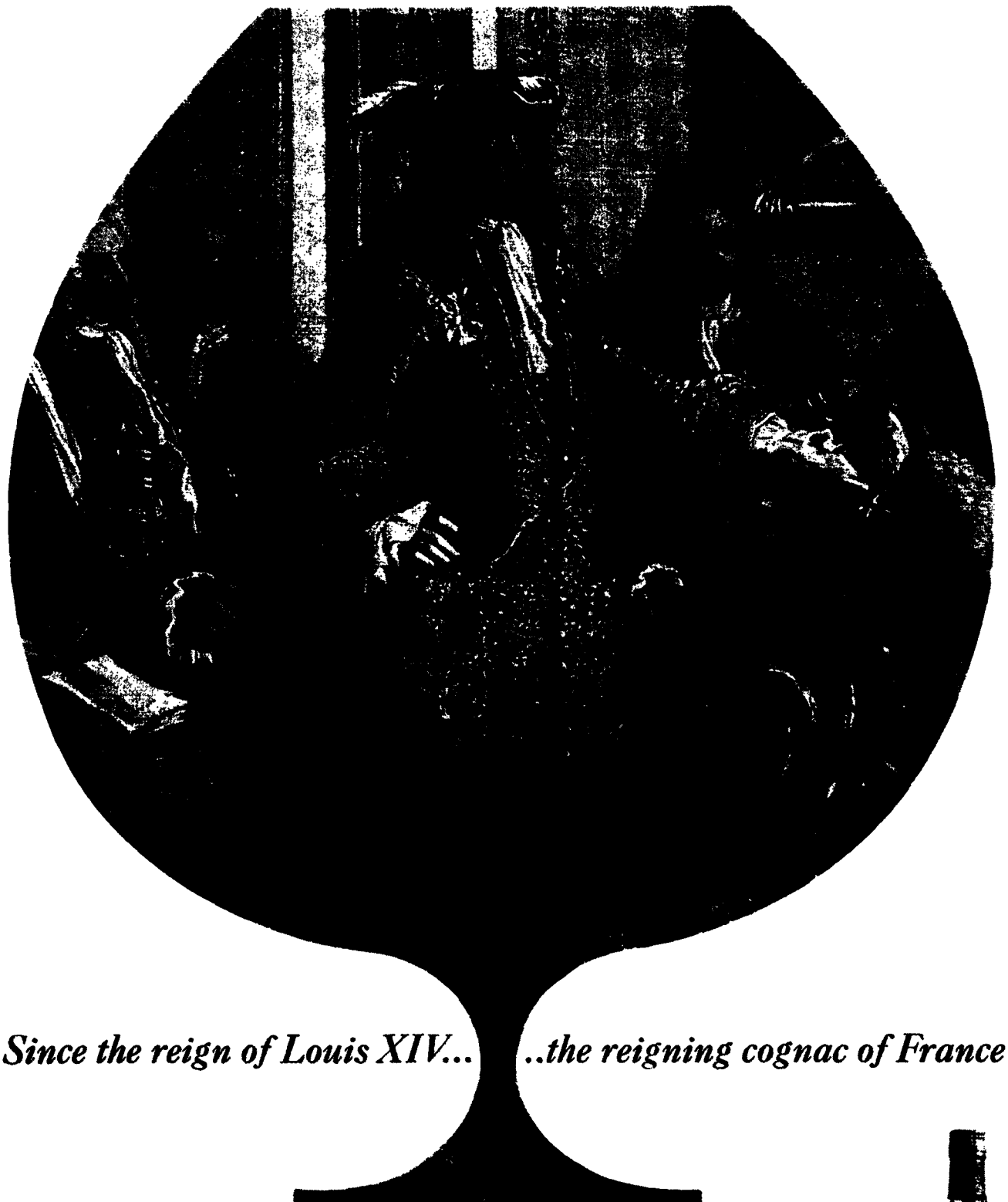

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